THE

NUMERICAL BIBLE

BEING

A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
WITH EXPOSITORY NOTES:

ARRANGED, DIVIDED, AND BRIEFLY CHARACTERIZED

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR

NUMERICAL STRUCTURE

EZEKIEL

The Text of the whole book and the Notes on Chaps. 1 to 37
by the late F. W. Grant.

Notes on Chaps. 38 to 48, with a Historical Chart of the Prophets,
Plans illustrating the Temple, and the Future Division of the Land,
by J. Bloore.

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ORDER AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOKS

THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW :—
   1. Genesis.
   2. Exodus.
   3. Leviticus.
   4. Numbers.
   5. Deuteronomy.

2. THE COVENANT-HISTORY :—
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   2. Judges.
      Ruth.
   3. Kings :—
      First Book (*Samuel*).
      Second Book (*Kings*).
   4. Captivity-Books :—
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      Nehemiah.
      Esther.
   5. Chronicles.

3. THE PROPHETS :—
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   2. Jeremiah.
      Lamentations.
   3. Ezekiel.
   4. Daniel.
   5. The Book of Minor Prophets:—
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      2. *Joel.* *Obadiah.* *Jonah.*
      3. *Nahum.* *Habakkuk.* *Zephaniah.*
      4. *Haggai.* *Zechariah.* *Malachi.*

4. THE PSALM-BOOKS:—
   1. The Psalms.
   2. Job.
   3. Solomon's Song.
   4. Ecclesiastes.
   5. Proverbs.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. THE GOSPELS :—
   1. Matthew. Mark. Luke.
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2. THE ACTS.

3. THE PAULINE EPISTLES :—
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      Second Epistle.
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      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Hebrews.
      Timothy.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Titus.

4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES :—
   1. Peter.
      First Epistle
      Second Epistle.
   2. James.
   3. John.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Third Epistle.
   4. Jude.

5. REVELATION.

PREFACE

After many years Ezekiel has at last been printed. The yellowed pages of the MS. have passed through many hands; much labor and prayer have been spent on them; many eyes have pored over them — besides the author, those of Mr. Ridout, P. J. L., T. O. L., and others engaged in the typing, composition and proof-reading. Most have now entered into that presence of which Ezekiel's closing sentence speaks: "The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there." Their work is left to His hands to bless.

This book was F. W. G.'s last labor, showing as Mr. Ridout has said, no less brilliant work than his previous volumes. He completed the text, but in compiling his Notes laid down his pen at the 38th chapter, at the threshold of the city which he longed to enter. From that point Mr. Bloore has ably taken up the Notes,which point out the great lesson which the temple and the holy city with their precise measurements are intended to impress upon the people of God: "Show the house, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern." It brings to a focus the continued repetition through the prophecy to each nation of the purpose of God's dealings with them: "They shall know that I am the Lord."

We confess to a first feeling of disappointment when we came to the Notes on the last sentence of the book, expecting an elaboration of all that could be said of that wonderful closing. But it was best to leave it in its grandeur and beauty—"Jehovah is there." The statement stands alone. The only thing that could be added is its New Testament correlative which widens out the blessing of that glorious presence beyond Israel, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death,

neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21: 3, 4).

That years have passed since the Notes were written has not lessened their value, but rather added to it, for Ezekiel speaks of eternal and unchanging principles, and time has only brought us nearer to their full display. Since Mr. Grant laid down his pen momentous changes have taken place in the countries that once formed part of the old Roman Empire, and the stage is set for the fulfilment of Ezekiel's later prophecies, as Mr. Bloore has shown in his Notes on the land. We are living in days when History is rapidly being made, days when events are occurring whose result is foretold in Ezekiel's prophecy, and which make such books as the present one so interesting to every student of Scripture. People desire to know the future; in the prophets it is unfolded for them, written by the Holy Spirit.

We place the pages of Ezekiel beside the History of the World and trace what has been fulfilled of the prophecies. Kingdoms and nations have passed away, leaving such memorials of the glory that has been that remind us most of their ruin, for they belong to man's day and his glory. Ezekiel directs our attention to this, for God's judgments fall upon the nations, and the glory of man is humbled to the dust. But another glory has filled the prophet's vision. His book opens with the description of "the brightness of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah;" he speaks of that glory departing from Israel, yet lingering as though loth to go; but the closing sentence of the book shows, "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." This is the glory that abides, nevermore to be removed.

—E. F.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMERALS

The reason for the significance must be sought in previous volumes, especially in Appendix II. to the Volume on the Psalms.

ONE.

Soleness, singularity, uniqueness; solitariness, barrenness.
Sufficiency, power, independency, pride, rebellion.
Identity, unchangeableness, consistency, perpetuity, truth, knowledge.

(UNITY.)

Unity, at-oneness, harmony, congruity, integrity, righteousness, obedience, concord, peace.

(PRIMACY.)

Supremacy, headship, rule; beginning, cause, occasion, source, foundation, ground, plea.

(COMBINATIONS OF MEANINGS.)

Life, personality, will. Choice, election. Grace.
God, Almighty, Eternal, Jehovah, Father.

TWO.

(RELATION.)

Help, support, confirmation, assurance, competent testimony.
Seconding, preservation, deliverance, salvation. Service, ministry.
Addition, increase, growth; progress, movement, activity.
Attachment, love, desire, prayer. Association, partnership, fellowship.

(SECOND.)

Dependence, faith. Inferiority, lowliness, humiliation, subjection.

(DIFFERENCE.)

Diversity, contrast; contradiction, opposition, conflict, enmity.
Double-mindedness, duplicity, deceit.

(DIVISION.)

Separation, analysis, differentiation, discernment; judgment, wisdom; sight.
Decay, death, dissolution.
Christ, Second Person, God and Man, Second Man, Word of God, Witness, Saviour, Servant, Minister. Cross. Soul. Woman.

THREE.

(THREE DIMENSIONS.)

Solidity; reality, realization, fulfilment, fulness; manifestation. Sanctuary; glory, praise. Name.

(THREE STRAIGHT LINES INCLOSE A SPACE.)

Setting apart for purpose; specialization, sanctification, holiness; transformation. Dwelling-place, possession, portion. Marriage. Ban.

(THIRD LINE OF A TRIANGLE RETURNS TO THE FIRST.)

Resurrection; return, revival, recovery; reproduction. Spirit.

FOUR.

Yieldingness, weakness; meekness, mercy. Failure, testing; experience; transitoriness, change.
Creature, earth, walk on earth, world.

FIVE.

God in government; capacity, responsibility, exercise, way and end; conditions.
Weak with the Strong; Man with God; Immanuel.

SIX.

Manifestation or fulness of evil. Work-day week; limit, discipline; mastery, overcoming.

SEVEN.

Completeness, perfection; rest.

EIGHT.

New in contrast with the Old.

TEN.

Simply a 5 by 2.

TWELVE.

The manifest rule of God.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF EZEKIEL.

EZEKIEL, as the third of the greater prophets, most evidently fills this place. His prophecy is as much related to Jeremiah on the one side as it is to Daniel on the other. Jeremiah sees the historical breaking of the link between God and His people—"Lo-ammi" written upon them; while Ezekiel is already among the captives, and enters in detail into the causes of the terrible breach.

The prophet's name, "the Mighty One makes strong" or "firm," is characteristic of the book, there being a manifest application of it at the outset, where God giving him his charge against a people "hard of brow and stiff of heart," declares that He has made his face hard against their faces, and his forehead hard against their foreheads. This implies not merely the strengthening necessary for his difficult position, but much more the attitude of Jehovah Himself towards them. The prophet with his message of wrath is indeed Ben-Buzi, "the child of my contempt," as God would declare with regard to him. They have treated Jehovah with the scorn which He must now needs recompense in judgment.

Thus also we have constantly throughout the book that characteristic expression, scarcely used elsewhere, "The hand of the Lord was upon me;" and again, "The hand of the Lord God fell upon me" (chap. viii. 1), and even, "The hand of the Lord was strong upon me," where the same Hebrew word *chazaq* is used (chap. iii. 14). Thus Jehovah abides, and His word abides, though it be now in judgment. "That ye may know that I am Jehovah," rings through almost every part, and this is a striking link with the book of Leviticus—the place of which Ezekiel occupies in the Pentateuch of the Prophets. In Leviticus we find appended again and again to the commandments there which enforce the holiness of their Deliverer, "I am Jehovah." Here His dealings with them affirm what He is as such, the Unchangeable, true to His own nature at all times, without the possibility of swerv-

ing from it. Thus with a people such as Israel have manifested themselves to be, judgment must have its course.

Judgment is therefore largely the theme here, though the end is grace. Sin has first to be manifested in order to be put away. Here again is an echo of Leviticus: it is the priest dealing with the leper. Ezekiel is emphasized for us as the priest-prophet, and the whole book is the expansion of the enjoined dealing with leprosy which Leviticus insists upon. Everything is in place here. It is in the presence of the glory of God that the condition is judged; and being plainly discovered, the glory leaves. The leper is thus put outside the camp. Yet this is not the end, for God "hateth putting away," and if He does this, it is but for a time, until His dealing is effectual in the souls of His people. This being found at the time of the end, the glory returns. It is noteworthy that it is the sanctuary in Israel which is seen to be defiled with the abominations of the people, and the book ends with the restored sanctuary and the divine wings brooding once more over the city, whose very name is now *Jehovah-Shammah*, "Jehovah is there."

Thus if there is judgment, it is the judgment of the priest: not only in necessary holiness, but the judgment of one who desires to justify, and not to judge. Ezekiel is thus all through the book the "son of man," a term by which only once elsewhere another prophet—Daniel—is addressed (Dan. viii. 17). Daniel is also the one who sees upon the throne of final empire, "One like unto a Son of man" (chap. vii. 13). Here also, how beautiful it is to see that on the heavenly throne is the "appearance of a man" (chap. i. 26). It is the Lord Himself who declares to us that the Father "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" (Jno. v. 27). It is by a Man that man is to be judged. It is by One who knows thoroughly all that pertains to man, who has been no stranger to a path of obedience amid all the conditions that have been brought in by the fall, in human weakness facing the full power of the enemy, bearing too the burden of sin, felt as none else could feel it, and drained the cup of wrath to its very dregs. Ezekiel is but the mere shadow of such an One in whose hands judgment is safe, and the divine pity shines all through it. Yet is the title divinely given to him, the assurance of a Heart that thus appeals to man's heart all the way through the long detail of that which has provoked a judgment inflicted only when even

divine patience has reached its limit, and further delay could only be dishonor. These details are but the necessary vindication, before the eyes of His creatures, of Him who judges. Thus Ezekiel is the book of manifestation; but in which not man alone, but God also is manifested, and in the love at last to which He is then able to give way.

Judgment has however in Ezekiel a peculiar character. It is not upon the great final judgment (upon which the eyes of the other prophets are so fixed) that Ezekiel dwells; although at the close we do in measure find this; but a nearer one, executed by the hands of men—of Nebuchadnezzar as the main instrument of it—whether upon Israel or upon the surrounding nations. Nebuchadnezzar introduces us, as we know, to a new period, which it is the part of Daniel fully to bring before us, "the times of the Gentiles"—of Gentile supremacy over Israel—and which lasts during the whole time of God's indignation against her. In Ezekiel we have not this as yet, but the preliminary clearing of the field upon which the new world-empires are ready to display themselves. Thus the judgment is not simply upon Israel, although in the first place there: the nations round come under it, and Nebuchadnezzar for thus executing it is awarded compensation (chap. xxix. 18-20).

The nations so visited in judgment are those who have had largest opportunity to learn of God, as having been in nearest connection with Israel: that is, with the revelation of God, however the nation has failed in its own testimony. If, then, she is herself judged, the nations around must not exalt themselves against her. There must be clean work made of the surrounding people before the new beginning. This forms the second part of the book, the judgment being seen to come upon Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, Egypt—seven nations; a complete survey of the field, beginning with the peoples kindred to Israel themselves, as Ammon, Moab and Edom; then the strangers in the land, Philistia, Tyre and Sidon; and then their old land of bondage, Egypt, out of which God delivered them in so signal a manner but which has been so long a snare to them in various ways. All these are related, though in different manner, to the chosen people. The view is complete, and its purpose obvious.

In the third part of the book, Israel is at last restored, and finally, to the favor of God. Theirs is a real resurrection, a revival out of a state

of death, such that their very bones are dry and scattered abroad, impossible, as one would think, to come together again. Theirs is then a true resurrection, with the new life from God accordant with this, and the blessing for the earth which they are destined to be—have indeed already been, through God's overruling grace, in spite of themselves—but are yet to be with their whole hearts His, thankfully filling the place which grace has given them. With this we have, as the type of the general work, the healing of the curse, as seen in the streams which, issuing from the sanctuary, renew the sea of death itself.

The divisions of the book are therefore manifest:

In the 1st Div. (Chaps. i.–xxiv.) Israel's rebellion is brought into the presence of Jehovah's unchangeable righteousness. God Himself appears, as it were, to plead His cause against a rebellious people; and Israel is brought into the light of the awful Presence, every detail of her wanderings perfectly exposed.

Div. 2 (Chap. xxv.–xxxii.) gives the judgment at the same time upon the surrounding nations, the enemies of the people of God as such, while—

Div. 3 (Chaps. xxxiii.–xlviii.) gives the prophetic history of Israel's resurrection and restoration.

NOTES

How little can those who are away from God measure the distance they have gone from Him! Away from Him who is Light, and the only light, the soul is in necessary darkness. And even with one who has a memory of the light, there is a lack of responsive energy to overcome the oppression of the existing darkness. For this God Himself must come in, and this is one meaning of the opening vision. Even then we are reminded of the Lord's words that "to them that are without, all these things are done in parables." It is what they complained of in the prophet's speech (chap. xx. 49), and there was so much truth in this as to enable them to put away the conviction it should have forced upon them. The Lord's answer to a somewhat similar thought on the part of His disciples did not ignore the fact of the parabolic form, but asserted the competence they should have had to understand it: "Know ye not this parable?" He asks, "and how then will ye know *all* parables?" (Mk iv. 13). Yet He adds, "To you *is it given* to know;" which does not deny their responsibility, for God's gifts are not arbitrarily withheld, but casts us upon Himself for competence. It is good for us to realize all sides of truth like this when we take up Ezekiel. Though it be all of grace, yet we must remember that to see what Ezekiel saw we must be in some sense where Ezekiel was. Grace does not release from the conditions which holiness demands, but enables for them. Oh then that we might realize this vision as He who searcheth the deep things of God can give ability!

Subdivision 1.

The charge is given to the prophet, as we have seen, by Jehovah Himself, and in a marvelous revelation of Himself as the holy Governor of the world which He has made The awful solemnity of wills in opposition to such an One is here emphasized. The glory of Jehovah is revealed, though in terms necessarily symbolical, as in fact all visions of divine glory apart from "Christ come in flesh" must be. How blessed to have *here* the deepest revelation, in the sweet and tender speech of Him who has become Man in order to bring it to us! Yet, even in Ezekiel, as we have already seen, there is, as it were, "the appearance of a Man upon the throne." God is drawing near in a way which in many respects cannot fail to remind us of the vision of Patmos. Ezekiel himself is truly in Patmos—in a place of isolation in the midst of a world hostile to God; and here with the awful sorrow added of the just judgment of God upon a people in revolt from Him. All the more do we see here how all creation works in harmonious obedience to Him This is what the living creatures speak of; and not only they, but the cycles of earthly history, as represented by the wheels, show fully the same thing. All creation, all events, display His glory. and it is in the presence of such an One that Israel's sin must be brought in order to give it its full character. Yet for the soul of the saint what comfort in such a revelation! No wonder that Ezekiel is strengthened by it to stand under the weight of his commission. How thus, in times of greatest failure and apostasy, God comes near to those who have a heart for Him! Thus it is with Ezekiel; thus it is with Daniel; and even the beloved John in his blessed vision stands amid a people who have already begun to depart from God

Ephesus, to whom is committed the highest view of the Church which is given us, has left its first love, and the voice now is to overcomers — not merely with regard to the world, which opposes its darkness to the divine light, but in the Church over which the same darkness is ominously stealing. Yet, in the face of all, it is the God of all encouragement who always speaks to us. To hear His voice indeed is to receive "not the spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

1. The opening verses, as an introduction to the whole book, should be of the deepest significance. As we look at them, at first they may seem but a mere record of dates and places; but we may be sure that underneath we shall find a true introduction, every word of which bears upon that which is to follow. It is thus only that we can read these scriptures aright when we willingly pass over nothing, assured that everywhere the word of God will vindicate itself as that, and that to make one word from the divine mouth idle, is the insult of unbelief to Him who speaks in it. There is a studied emphasis here, manifestly put upon that which we might overlook. This 30th year, this 4th month, this 5th day of the month, are manifestly specifications full of purpose. The 30th year is, no doubt, as it is generally considered, the year of the prophet. It was the period at which the priest entered upon his office; it was the year in which it pleased Christ, Himself the true Priest, to begin His public ministry. This 30th year has in it as one of its factors that number 5 which we shall find accompanying us remarkably through the book: We have thus the 5th day, the 5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity. Five is the number of man in relation to God. It is the number, therefore, which speaks of responsibility under His government, and that is most suited in the book of Ezekiel. Yet we must not forget that there is another side to it, and that the weak with the strong, the $4 + 1$, we have found many times to speak of Immanuel. The New Testament is thus a 5th Pentateuch, and of what does it speak? Certainly the burden of its message is not responsibility, but the blessed way in which the weakness of humanity and the strength of Deity have come together in the Person revealed.

Then let us notice that 10 is but a twice 5, and that this number 2, which is the additional factor, is the number which speaks directly of, and therefore emphasizes, relationship. Here is a 3×10, the number of manifestation and of the Spirit alike, and in connection with man, thus in company with God. And when the Lord came up from Jordan, in His 30th year, from His pledge to that ministry in which the river of death was indeed the point to which it guided, and the end for which it marked Him out, it was to be manifested and approved of God as the perfect Mediator, His beloved Son, upon whom then the Dove from heaven descends. Thus He becomes in full reality the Christ, anointed for His work of bringing God and man together. And here also, in what is now before us (though we must modify a good deal the proper force of the words), we may say that the prophet is anointed for the work upon which he enters, where man's relationship to God is that which is in question, which he is to realize in his soul in its tremendous consequences, yet where in the end God will indeed be seen to unite Himself to man in His own manner, and according to what has been ever in His heart.

This 30th year is now in its 4th month, speaking manifestly of that season of trial to which everything under God must come, which for mere fallen man

EZEKIEL

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i–xxiv.)

Israel's rebellion brought into the presence of Jehovah's unchangeable righteousness.

SUBDIVISION 1 (Chaps. i.–vii.)

The charge given to the prophet.

SECTION 1 (Chap. i.)

Jehovah the Almighty whom all creation, all events, harmoniously obey.

1 (1-3): The person of the prophet and the occasion of the prophecy.

1. NOW it came to pass in the [a] thirtieth year, in the fourth [month], on the fifth of the month, as I was amidst the [b] captivity by the river Chebar, the [c] heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth of the month, which was

[a] Num. 4. 3. 1 Chron. 23. 3. *cf.* Lk. 3. 23.
[b] 2 Ki. 17. 6. 2 Ki. 24. 8-16.
[c] *cf.* Dan. 10. 5. *cf.* Rev. 4. 1.

proves necessarily disastrous, but which for those who accept the searching out is but "for a season, if need be," and the end, blessing. Meanwhile the prophet is one among a band of captives by the river Chebar—the "great" or "abundant" river—evidently reminding us of Isaiah's language when God declared by him that He would bring upon Israel "the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory" (Isa. viii. 7). Here it is indeed another spoiler, for the land of Israel is already a land that the rivers have spoiled (Isa. xviii. 2). Babylon has succeeded Assyria, but with no relief in the oppressing hand; yet, though the judgment be not removed, here it is, that over the head of one who, bowed under it, accepts the divine judgment, the heavens are opened and there are "visions of God." How blessed to know, by the voice of nature itself, that it is night and not day that opens the heavens; and here, whatever the message that may be given, the first thing for the prophet's soul is that there are "visions of God"

With God coming in, how everything changes, even though nothing may be changed! For there is no desolation like the absence of God; and there is nothing to lack with His presence realized. Thus the end is, as it were, seen from the beginning. These visions of God will be, at the end, visions of exceeding comfort. The word that is to come is yet unspoken. First of all God is *seen*, and by and by there will be His word. But the sentence closes for a moment here, that the sweetness of the vision may be taken in without distraction, for here we have something that had never before occurred. Never before could it be said that the heavens were opened. Over this poor, lone man they opened, into whose soul the pang of the captivity of the people of God had entered in a way unrealized by his fellows around him. Isaiah had seen the glory of the Lord in the temple, and everywhere of course it is the same glory. That vision had closed, and the sanctuary on earth was desolate; but God remained and is seen in the higher sphere where His throne abides untouched by all the sin and sorrow of earth It is the preparation for that which we find in Daniel, where in contrast with that which was said when the ark,

[in] the fifth year of King [d]Jehoiachin's captivity, the [e]word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel the [f]priest, the son of Buzi, in the [g]land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar; and the [h]hand of Jehovah was there upon him.

2 (4-21): The chariot of Deity.

2. And I [i]saw, and behold a [j]stormy wind came out of the north, a great [k]cloud and a [l]fire infolding itself,

[d] 2 Chr. 36. 9, 10. [e] *cf.* Jer. 1. 2, etc. *cf.* Lk. 3. 2. [f] *cf.* Jer. 1. 1. with Lk. 1. 5, 13. *ctr.* 1 Sam. 3. 1. [g] *cf.* Is. 39. 6, 7.

[h] ch. 8. 1; ch. 37. 1; *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 21. [i] *cf.* Rev. 1. 2, etc. *cf.* Rev. 21. 1. [j] *cf.* Job 38. 1; *cf.* Is. 21. 1; *cf.* Ps. 148. 8. [k] Ps. 97. 2; *cf.* Rev. 1. 7. [l] *cf.* Heb. 12. 29; Hab. 3. 5; Ps. 97. 3.

the throne of "the God of all the earth," passed through the dry bed of Jordan to its place in the land, it is now "the God of heaven" who is constantly before us. A higher point of view, and therefore a wider view also, is reached; and these opened heavens have now disclosed for us things that were in the time of the prophet a secret in the heart of God. Yet he who has reached the vision of God Himself has reached that beyond which there can be no height higher. He Himself is the realized pledge of all blessedness to come, and there can be nothing else but this. Thus Ezekiel may well be strengthened for all further disclosures. They can only disclose Him more whom the soul knows and recognizes as its security and rest.

And now we are carried on to look at another side of things; for on this "5th day of the month, which was in the 5th year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar; and the hand of Jehovah was there upon him." Notice the change of person. We have here, so to speak, the official account, as before we had the personal; and the message is necessarily one of sorrow and judgment. This 5th year of king Jehoiachin's captivity shows us how Israel's present relationship to God has been marked by the taking away of him whose name falsely prophesied of "establishment by Jehovah." "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" (Ps. xciv. 20). The false confidence must be taken away before God can come in for blessing, and when His "judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 9). These are principles of God's very nature which no grace that He shows can ever alter. Grace itself can only reign through righteousness, and the word that now comes is the word of Jehovah, this unchangeable God, to Ezekiel the priest, whom "the Mighty One makes strong" to proclaim it. The son of Buzi, "my contempt," marks the fruit of that contempt of God which all that had passed and was passing now in Israel, so completely manifested on the part of the people. Thus he was in the land of the Chaldeans (perhaps "the robber-like" or "the encroachers"), by the river Chebar; and now, molding him to His will, while sustaining him for all that that will may involve, the hand of Jehovah is there upon him.

2. He looks, and now, out of the north, there comes "a stormy wind," "a great cloud and a fire infolding itself" with a brightness round about it, "and out of the midst, as the look of brass and gold, out of the midst of the fire." The north is not simply the quarter from which the invaders come—though the judgment of God it truly is which is executed by them—but it is rather, as always in its deeper meaning, the place of darkness, of mystery therefore, but a mystery which the coming in of God must needs dispel. The judgment itself declares Him—vindicates His nature, answers the questioning suspense of the

and it had a [m] brightness round about, and out of the midst thereof as the look of [n] brass [and] gold, out of the midst of the fire. And out of the midst thereof [came] the likeness of four [o] living creatures. And this

[m] Ps. 97. 4. *cf.* Ps. 18. 12. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16.
[n] *cf.* Rev. 1. 15 with Dan. 10. 6.
[o] Gen. 3. 24; Ps. 18. 10; Ps. 99. 1. *cf.* Is. 6. 2; *cf.* Rev. 4. 6 8.

righteous perplexed by His long patience in the presence of evil. Thus it is a storm-wind, a whirlwind, in fact, as we see by the fire infolding itself, "taking hold of itself," as it is literally, something which answers to what we shall see in the whirling wheels afterwards; and, as fire is ever sustained by that on which it takes hold, here it takes hold upon itself—it is sustained by its own nature. This fire is not pure wrath; it is rather, as a symbol, the holiness of God of which it speaks, a consuming fire indeed, therefore, to iniquity, but judgment is not its essence, not what it seeks or delights in, but what is necessitated by the perfection of God Himself. Judgment is rather seen in the whirl of the wind, such a whirl as the preacher saw in nature (Eccl. 1: 6), and it is but part of the ordained circuit of events as seen in those succeeding generations in which each repeats what has been before it, and yet does not repeat it wholly: for there is progress, a purpose working through it which is but the purpose of God; though in strange forms to which the sin of man has compelled it. But if there be a great cloud, there is yet a brightness round about, a brightness which necessarily must be when we know Him whose that purpose is; and lo, "out of the midst of it as the look of brass and gold, out of the midst of the fire." Thus the nature of God Himself is seen, what is at the heart of the judgment, and which, therefore, while it has in it the fixedness which is always symbolized by the brass, is the display of the glory of God, such as the gold ever signifies.* All this is but a first and distant view of that which is seen approaching, but there are already in it the elements of that which presently is seen in detail. The first thing indeed is that in the form of judgment, God it is who is enwrapping Himself; but in such a way that He Himself can be discerned—nay, is made known and glorified. With Him, that which makes Him known is necessarily that which glorifies Him.

The first and distant view already gives the character of that which is approaching. It is storm—the divine wrath—but God revealed in it, and therefore, brightness round about, which presently we shall find, moreover, putting on the iris-hues in which the light breaks out into a band of various glory which once more reveals Him in the storm when it is passed, and now in covenant with the earth, enfranchised and renewed. It is the anticipation of what we find in Revelation, the rainbow round the throne. As now it rapidly draws near, and the details develop, this agreement with Revelation is marked in such a manner as to be recognized at once; for out of the fire there comes the likeness of four living creatures.

They are, strictly, "living ones," creatures not being expressed, though surely implied in the four forms of man, lion, ox, and eagle, in which they appear. The human form however predominates and gives character to them; while

* The word *hashmal* in the original is translated *electron* in the Septuagint, or amber, as in the Authorized Version. It is, according to Wilson, a compound word, formed apparently of the Hebrew word *nahash*, brass, and another root meaning "to be smooth." In this way it suggests the similar word χαλκολιβανον of Rev. 1: 15. These are the two characteristics of judgment, as seen in the brass, and of glory, as seen in the other smooth bright metal, probably gold. Thus it is glory in judgment that is displayed.—S. R.

was their appearance; they had the likeness of a [p] man;
and every one had [q] four faces, and every one of them
had four [r] wings. And their [s] feet were upright* feet;

* Or "straight," not like those of a man. See notes.

p *cf.* ch. 9. 2 with ch. 10. 8.
cf. Jno. 5. 27 with Matt. 25 31.
q *cf.* Gen. 2. 10.
r *cf.* Lk. 17. 37; *ctr.* Ps. 68. 13 with Jno. 12. 47. s *cf.* Hab. 3. 19; *cf.* Rom. 2. 2.

yet each one has four faces and four wings corresponding to these. Thus it is not a likeness of God that they present; and all likeness of Him is expressly forbidden. They are creatures of His—no more; in His hand, obedient to His will, and used for His purposes; in fact, as we shall see, instruments of His government; in Revelation seen in the midst of and around the Throne; here underneath, it for here the view is from earth, and there in heaven. They have in general the likeness of a man, but their feet are like the feet of an ox, "upright," and not extended, as is man's foot. They sparkle, giving the look of glowing brass, reminding us once more of Revelation, but there of Him who appears to John, and who is the Lord Himself, "His feet like unto fine (or glowing) brass, as if they burned in a furnace." The treading down in wrath is clearly indicated. The sole of the foot is like that of a young bullock, for patient labor is manifest in the exercise of righteous judgment.

They had human hands under their wings: implying doubtless their possession of that delicacy of touch and power of manipulation which the lower extremities lacked; thus they were not quadrupedal, but human; their hands being moreover under those wings which showed them to be fitted for a higher sphere than that of earth.

Their wings joined together, so that there was perfect unity of action among the whole four living ones, the face guiding in a straightforward course in which was no deviation; a higher Spirit than that of the living creature itself in fact guided and governed all.

In the vision of Revelation the four forms are separate, which here we find united in each living creature They are given also in another order from that given here, and plainly suited to what is contemplated in the second part of Revelation where the Lion of Judah takes the seven-sealed book. There, the lion comes first therefore; the emblem of the resistless power which is fundamental to perfect government. A government without power to execute its will is plainly none. We might expect from this that swift decisiveness of action which we so naturally look for in view of the almightiness of God and His holiness as against evil; and indeed such action is drawing near at that time of the end which John is looking on to. Yet the cry of the martyred saints, when the fifth seal is opened, tells how long has been the delay of judgment for which they wait, and for which they are still told to wait. But there is a patience which results from the very consciousness of strength; and with everything completely under His control, there is no haste in the execution of the divine purposes of God. Thus the patient-working ox follows the lion, to supply what is needed to the first thought; the ox too being the worker for coming harvest, as this patience of God is to have fruit in blessing to His creatures. The long-suffering of the Lord is for salvation. Then, the human-faced cherub at once reminds us of how He has come in to manifest Himself in manhood for the accomplishment of this, and how He is seeking to be known, intimately, to lead us into fellowship with Himself. And with this there will be necessarily exercise of heart and conscience, as the man's face still

and the sole of their feet was like the sole of the [t]foot of a young bullock: and they sparkled like the look of burnished [u]brass. And they had the [v]hands of a man [w]under their wings on their four sides; and they

t cf. Deut. 25. 4.
u cf. Lev. 26. 19.
v cf. Is. 6. 6. ch. 10. 8.
w cf. Rev. 4. 8.

reminds us: for of these different forms the man alone speaks of a moral agent. And this exercise under divine government is none the less, but the more thorough and solemn, because His ways in this, as the final figure of the eagle comes to assure us, are ways that often soar beyond our knowledge: God were no God if there were not depths in His nature and a wisdom in His ways inaccessible to man. He dwelleth in the light unapproachable; One whom no man hath seen, nor can see; though, blessed be His name, in what we know of Him, better known after all than we are to ourselves.

Thus these four forms, while certainly not meant to attract engagingly the eye, still less in their fourfold complexity as represented in Ezekiel, nor to convey to us the idea of any actually existing spiritual beings, are manifestly suited to intimate to us the characters of a government which God exercises continually, with a plenitude of power in subjection to which all creation works. Thus in the apocalyptic vision the living creatures are seen from a heavenly standpoint, "in the midst of the throne and round about the throne." Here they are *under* it; for we are looking at them from the world-side, whence they naturally appear more complex in their forms, and with the world-number, four, emphasized in the four faces and four wings of each. The faces are in a different order also from that in which the forms are represented in Revelation.

But here, in Ezekiel, the human form in general is dwelt upon; it is the human face that comes to the front; and this suits well the tenderness of God's approach to His people when in trial, which Scripture everywhere exhibits. How good to see that, just here, when judgment is impending, yet to the prophet's view, the lion is not first, but the man first. The human form invites, as by and by we see even upon the throne itself. The lion is seen next, upon the right hand (*yamin*), which is the Hebrew also for the south: opposed thus to all the soft, relaxing influences which are naturally implied under this, for the judgment of God must no more be treated easily and with indifference, as hitherto. The ox is on the left, or as it might otherwise be rendered, the north, to meet with patient resistance the dark and evil forces proceeding from the kingdom of darkness, which must not be allowed to oppose or ally themselves with the holy judgment of God. While finally, behind all is the eagle, to remove from the earth the corruption which defiles it (Luke xvii. 37), that as of old He may bear His people upon eagles' wings, and bring them to Himself (Ex. xix. 4).

The creature-forms are not separate from one another here, as seen in the heavenly vision of Revelation, but each living being unites in itself these diverse characters, as on earth we see the acts of divine government displaying, though not in equal prominence, the whole.

As to the wings of the living creatures, they are four, not six as in Revelation. With only two of these they fly; and these are joined one to another in perfect unity of action; while two cover their bodies, as in a higher Presence. In the seraphim of Isaiah's vision, who have six wings like those of Revelation, two cover the face and two the feet, while with two alone they

four had their faces and their two wings [thus]: Their wings were [x]joined one to another; they [y]turned not when they went; they went every one [z]in the direction of its face.* As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a [a]man, and they four had the face of a [b]lion on the right side: and they four had the face of an [c]ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an [d]eagle: and [thus] were their faces, and their wings were spread out upward, two of each joined to one another and two [e]covering their bodies. And they went every one in the direction of its face: whither the [f]spirit was to go, they went; they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning [g]coals of fire, as the appearance of torches: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was [h]bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures [i]ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. †

x *cf.* Rev. 5. 13.
cf. Rev. 12. 7.
y ver. 12.
cf. Lk. 9. 51 with Isa. 50. 7.
z *cf.* Prov. 4. 25.
a *cf.* Rev. 4. 6-8.
cf. 1 Cor. 2. 11.
b *cf.* Prov. 30. 30.
c *cf.* Ps. 144. 14.
d *cf.* 2 Sam. 1. 23.
cf. Is. 40. 31.
e *cf.* Is. 6. 2 with 1 Ki. 19. 13.
f ver. 20.
cf. Heb. 1. 7.
g Ps. 18. 12.
h Ps. 97. 3, 4.
i *cf.* Dan. 9. 21.
cf. Mt. 24. 27.

* Or "straight forward"—literally, "unto beyond his face," *i. e.*, in the way he was looking.

† "Flash of lightning" is one word, *bazak*, different from the word in the previous verse, *barak*.

fly. Can there be any true work for God, or wisdom for it, where in the presence of His glory the creature takes not its place of nothingness before Him? Thus there was no unsteadiness or fickleness in their movement, they went each one in the direction of its face: and, obedient to the spirit that dwelt in them, they lacked no ability for the attainment of their end, whither the spirit was to go they went with simple directness of purpose—they turned not when they went.

The likeness of the living creatures as a whole bears witness of the coming of unwilling judgment which the people have provoked, but which still is not of the essence of what is here. Their appearance is indeed like burning coals of fire, which nevertheless is not identified with the living creatures, but as the appearance of torches (not simply destroying, but enlightening also) goes up and down among them. But the judgment is manifest: the fire is bright, and out of the fire goes forth lightning; and to this the motions of the living creatures agree: they go and return as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

Now we have another thing, which is altogether outside the vision of Revelation. For there, as already said, it is as seen by one in heaven. Here the prophet is on earth, and the wheels are seen upon earth also, and have a more intimate connection with it than the living creatures themselves. Yet they move in unison with these, nay, are moved by them, for the spirit of the living creatures is in the wheels, and their character is thus reflected in them. But the wheels are moreover gem-like. their appearance and their work is as the look of a topaz; for there is in them the display of the attributes of God, as in the jewels of the high priest's breastplate, which are the Urim and Thummim, the divine "lights and perfections," the glory of the refracted light, which God is.

The four wheels are alike, and have one fundamental meaning; their appear-

Now as I beheld * the living creatures, behold one [j] wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures for the four faces thereof. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the look of a [k] topaz: and they four had one likeness, and their appearance and their structure was as it were a [l] wheel in the midst of a wheel. When they went they went upon their four sides; they [m] turned not when they went. As for their rims, they were so [n] high † that they

[j] ch. 10. 9-13. *cf.* Ps. 68. 17.
[k] Dan. 10. 6. *cf.* Mt. 28. 3.
[l] ch. 10. 10.
[m] vers. 12, 17. *cf.* Gen. 3. 24. *cf.* Jas. 1. 17.
[n] *cf.* Is. 40. 22, 26.

* Literally, "And I saw."

† Perhaps the literal rendering is even more striking: "And their rims and their height, and to fear for them."

ance and their structure is as it were a wheel in the midst of a wheel; so that they go upon four sides, the one wheel being set into the other, which it crosses at right angles; thus, like the living creatures, having no need to turn, to whatever quarter they may go.

The wheel speaks naturally, primarily, of the revolution of time, marked as it is for us by those luminaries which God appointed for "signs" as well as "seasons;" and most significant signs they are: heaven putting thus the stamp of vanity upon the fallen creature, whose dependence upon God it reveals for that renewal of life ever needed by it. "To everything there is a season," and no more; nothing continues at one stay: the day comes out of the womb of night, only to go back into it again. The winter swallows up the autumn fruits. So the generations of men follow one another; and even "history," as is often said, "repeats itself." "The thing that has been is that which shall be, and there is nothing new under the sun." Yet with all this repetition there is a certain progress also: the wheel is moving; not only so, but it is moving *on*. Whither? There is often a certain betterment as it moves, which is apt to fill us with only too exuberant a hope. The wheel has eyes, in which there seems the light of purpose. And indeed, purpose of a sort is easily seen: the spirit of the living creature at least is in the wheels; the living creature taking on also, as Ezekiel sees, the human form preeminently, as the course of events plainly shows, the large control of things man has, though not alone: for with him, constantly carrying, often controlling, often thwarting him, there works a force, itself under the constraint of law, without which he can do nothing.

And here the wheel rises so high that it is dreadful: he can see but a brief portion—follow but a short way; and if he sees no more, the light dies out again; for what of this spirit of man which counts for so much, and is yet so little? which passes so readily as a breath that cometh not again? Whither does it pass? as the preacher asks: "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Even the spirit of the living creature seems thus but part of the machinery itself. The wheel it is that controls, and the spirit of man is under this law which so utterly abases him, and carries him down at last into a darkness out of which no one sees him emerge. *He* then is no master of the wheel, but the wheel is master: he dies as the beast dies; and how is he then greater than the beast? Thus death baffles him. The earth abides, and things that seem passed away return again; but the generations do not return. Progress there may be, and

were dreadful; and the four had their rims [o]full of eyes round about. And when the [p]living creatures went, the wheels went beside them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went; thither [their] spirit was to go: and the wheels were lifted up along with them, for the [q]spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went, and when those stood, these stood, and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up along with them, for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

o *cf.* Zech. 3. 9.
p ch. 10. 16, 17 *cf.* Ps. 103. 20, 21.
q *cf.* Rev. 16. 4, 5.

fruitful thoughts take root and spring up, but it is upon the graves of those who have wrought to produce the harvest. Yet here is precisely that which has in it purpose of its own, and the highest, that is moral, purpose. In the mystery of this sentence, as it surely seems, upon him—which the voice within him interprets so persistently and bodiugly as sentence—the wheel begins to put on the topaz look, and the "lights and perfections" of God reveal themselves in it. The supreme control which is not in man's hands can still less be in the wheel itself. The eyes in it after all speak of a wisdom which is alien to mere mechanism; and if the wheel be but the ordinance of God, we may learn hope of Him whose heavens proclaim to us their control over the earth, and how He can bring light out of darkness, summer out of winter, life out of death.

Resurrection is indeed the full display of God's thought. Without it there is no proper revolutiou of the wheel; and God Himself is not seen, who cannot be seen in judgment merely. *That* is His "strange work," and His heart cannot be seen in it. But this "sore travail which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised with it," is but God's travail with man so exercised for a new birth, which is to make him, beyond all that the first creation made him, a child of God, the heir of a glorious purpose, of which revelation has been preaching to him from the beginning, even in the story of those primal days to which the Scripture-record carries us back. For these, even then, were in a manner new-creative days—days of resurrection for that earth not *created* in that state of desolation into which it had now lapsed under those whelming waters, the records of whose work the earth has been little by little disclosing to us. The "days" of Genesis 1, with deeper lessons than ever geology could in the nature of things give us, reveal indeed the work of Him who has alone the power, not only to "renew the face of the earth," but to renew also man's moral nature. Spite of all resistance, He carries on step by step to their complete development those purposes of His grace which the dispensations are disclosing, which are all here wrapped up, in a way which went far beyond the knowledge of him who wrote, not by traditional inspiration, but by the teaching of the Spirit of God.

Thus, in the record of the first day, if God calls the darkness which He is displacing "night," yet "the evening and the morning" are the day, as He would interpret to us; a day which does not therefore begin with the night and end with the night, as we have sadly chosen, if for our common purposes conveniently, to reckon it. Nor does it begin with the day and end with the night either. No; the evening begins, and the morning follows. The light which a

3 (22-28): The heavenly throne and glory of Jehovah

3. And over the heads of the living creature was the likeness of an [r]expanse as the look of the terrible crystal stretched forth over their heads above. And under the expanse were their wings spread the one toward the other; every one had two which covered, even every one had two which covered their bodies. And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings as the sound of many [s]waters, as the voice of the Almighty, as the noise of a multitude, as the sound of a [t]host: when they stood, they let down their wings. And there was a [u]voice from above the expanse which was over their heads; and they stood, and let down their wings.*

* Or "when they stood, they let down."

[r] ch. 10. 1. *cf.* Gen. 1. 6-8 with Ex. 24. 10.

[s] *cf.* Dan. 10. 6. *cf.* Rev. 1. 15.

[t] *cf.* ch. 43. 2. *cf.* Ps. 18. 13. *cf.* 1 Chr. 14. 15.

[u] *cf.* 2 Ki. 7. 6. *cf.* Ps. 29. 3-10 with 1 Ki. 19. 12.

the call of God has just appeared, thus seems at once to be disappearing again, and the darkness to triumph over it. But it has not really done so. The day is only being conformed to the type of resurrection which will be recognized by faith on the part of His people in coming generations as the inimitable, unmistakable pattern of His workmanship. In the victory over sin and evil which are coming in, God is to be known as the God of resurrection. Death is the brand of vanity upon the evil, the leveling of the pride which is the rebellion of the creature against the Hand that formed it. But it is in that Hand also the weapon by which the arch-enemy is defeated and spoiled; and through death, for those who accept the humiliation of it, there is found the way of life. The revolution of the wheel, though it be high and outside the ken of sense merely, is that in which it puts on its topaz look and reveals its mystery.

3. Thus Ezekiel does not see merely the wheels, or the living creatures; he sees over their heads the likeness of an expanse as the look of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. And again, above the likeness of the expanse itself there is the likeness of a throne; and upon the likeness of the throne there is, what indeed is strange and wonderful to see, the appearance of a Man above upon it. As soon as we look up thither we become conscious, in the attitude of the living creatures, that they are themselves in profound subjection to the higher power that is there. The harmony in which they act with one another is manifested as only the result of a common subjection to One who controls all. Their wings are spread out in full activity, their bodies remaining however always covered by their wings, as we have already seen them, and as is emphasized here by the repetition. And now the sound of their wings is heard as the sound of many waters—a cataract of sound, which presently is realized as the voice of the Almighty—the noise indeed as of a multitude, but not tumultuous—the sound of a marshalled host. This is the plain interpretation of the living creatures themselves; which the heathen, as the monuments of Babylon have shown us, worshiped in such forms (there indeed grotesque), seeing what was under the firmament only, and not able to pierce to the Throne that was above it, and turning thus "the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. i. 23). Here they are in their place, and serving; at His voice moving, wing-enwrapped, before Him; at His voice stilled to absolute rest, with their wings let down.

And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a [v]throne, as the appearance of a [w]sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a [x]man above upon it. And I saw as the look of [y]brass [and] gold, as the appearance of [z]fire within it round about from the appearance of his [a]loins and upward, and

v ch. 10. 1. Ps. 103. 19.
w *cf.* Ex. 24. 10. *cf.* Rev. 4 3.
x *cf.* Is 6. 1 with Phil. 2. 9-11.
y *cf.* ver. 4. ch. 8. 2.
z *cf.* Heb. 12. 29.
a *cf.* Rev. 19. 12, 16. *cf.* Ps. 45. 3, 4. *cf.* Is. 11. 5.

But we are permitted not alone to behold the throne, and hear the voice of the Eternal, but to see Him who sits upon it. First, however, as to the throne: it is as the appearance of a sapphire stone. This does not seem to be what we now call the sapphire. That of the ancients was, as Pliny testifies, "refulgent with spots of gold—azure, never transparent:" that is, the lapis lazuli. And when we hear God's own voice claiming the heavens as His throne, how suited is the likeness of a sapphire stone! The word is derived from one (*saphar*) which means "to number," and hence "to tell, declare," and this is the word used when it is said that "the heavens *declare* the glory of God" (Ps. xix. 1). This sapphire throne, then, is symbolically just the starry vault, which is seen similarly in the vision of God upon Mt. Sinai (Ex. xxiv. 10) when "they saw the God of Israel; and there was beneath His feet as transparent sapphire-work, even as the heavens themselves for clearness" This seems to have been taken by some to prove that the ancient sapphire was itself transparent; but in fact there is no occasion from this to suppose so. There is, in what is seen, the general appearance of a sapphire stone, but with this the added character of a transparency such as there is in the heavens themselves: words which show plainly that it is the starry heavens that are here symbolized.

Upon this throne then, there is "the likeness as the appearance of a Man above upon it." We are warned by the language here to be careful how far we go in the way of exact application. There can be no doubt indeed for the Christian that Christ exactly fills the picture; even as Daniel (Ezekiel's contemporary) sees in his vision "One like unto a Son of Man come in the clouds of heaven," and dominion given to Him (Dan. vii. 13). Yet, no doubt, the time is not come even yet in which this will be fulfilled. This does not however prevent the ultimate reference to Christ which is such an imperative necessity. Christ on the throne is God's ideal of government for a world departed from Him, and He it is who is thus to subdue all things to God. Thus it is not strange if the divine throne ever puts on the human character. And it surely does so. Is God a man that He should repent? It is human essentially to do so; yet governmentally God "repenteth Him of the evil;" nay, announces this as a principle in His dealings with men (Joel ii. 13; Jer. xviii. 8). His threatenings, therefore, no less than the blessings He holds out to them, are for the proving of what is in their hearts, as again He declares (Deut. viii. 2; xiii. 3; Ps. vii. 9; Jer. xvii. 10). But why should He thus try the creatures He has made, who knows them perfectly, and the whole issue of every trial? Ah, it is the need of man himself and not of God, and a need on the part of all His creatures, who throughout the universe are spectators of His dealings with men, and who are learning in the Church His manifold wisdom;

from the appearance of his loins and downward I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about it. As the appearance of the [b] bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the brightness of the likeness of the [c] glory of Jehovah. And when I saw it, I [d] fell on my face, and heard a voice of one that spake.

b cf. 2 Sam. 23. 4 with Gen. 9. 15-16 Rev. 4. 3.
c cf. Ex. 33. 18-23. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 3. 18.
d ch. 43. 3. Dan. 8. 17. Rev. 1. 17.

and to learn "in the ages to come, the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7; iii. 10).

In connection with this, the dispensational changes show us the "likeness of the appearance of a Man upon the throne." Not only has the trial of man been constantly going on, but new methods of trial have been instituted as the old ones seemed to show themselves inefficacious. Thus after the fall, there was at first the appeal to conscience, and men were suffered to do what was right in their own eyes. What men now desire, as anarchy, has had its full trial at the very beginning of things. Even Cain, the first murderer, was not to be slain; and there were no kings or potentates of any kind; but the result was the deluge; the earth had to be washed thoroughly clean, and everything to start afresh. Then human government was ordained; and that was a step in advance from which there has been on God's part no return; nor has there been since such utter disaster as with those early generations. Yet human government soon manifested its incapacity to meet the deeper need of those whose hearts were departing from the living God. Men manufactured gods to suit themselves; and thus, out of a world given over to idolatry, God had to call a people among whom the truth could be maintained—the written Word taking the place of traditions which human imaginations darkened and perverted, and fresh revelations by the mouths of prophets whom He raised up giving constantly increasing light as the world's darkness deepened. We need not enter into more detail of those interventions which culminated in the rising of that Light of the world, whose beams to-day illumine all who have eyes to see. But this succession of various appeals to man, how *human*, if indeed much more than human, they are in that appeal! How plainly is to be seen in them the "appearance of the likeness of a Man" upon a throne which is in the heavens!

But here it is we find what had been seen by the prophet at the outset, giving character to the whole, "the *look of brass and gold*," the manifestation of unchangeable holiness in that which comes as judgment, but with the display in it of the glory of God. From the loins upward this appears in the fire—the glory of the Person who is thus revealed; while from the loins downward it is more His acts that are in view; where it is more the pure fire, but with a brightness round about, in which are seen the hues of the bow of promise, the work of righteousness executed being peace, "and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. xxxii. 17).

"This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah."

The prophet falls prostrate before his God, and then there comes to him a voice which raises and energizes him, and sends him forth Jehovah's messenger to a rebellious people.

SECTION 2 (Chaps. ii.-iii. 11.)

God's words to be spoken to those who would not hear.

And he saith unto me, Son of man, [e] stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee. And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and [f] set me upon my feet, and I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I [g] send thee to the children of Israel, to Gentiles, the [h] rebellious who have

[e] Dan. 10. 11. Mt. 17. 6, 7.
[f] ch. 3. 24.
[g] Is. 6. 8-10. Jer. 1. 7. *cf.* Jno. 20. 21.
[h] Dan. 9. 5.6. *cf.* Rom. 10. 21.

Sec. 2.

We have now the charge given to the prophet, which, as we see at once, is to speak to a people who will not hear, of whom it can only be hoped that here and there ears may be open to receive it. There is no encouraging hope with regard to the success of the message; yet, whether they would hear or whether they would forbear, they should know that there had been a prophet among them. All the more if there is not to be the encouragement of conscious success, is he to find it in the consciousness of the Lord with him, whom Israel would reject in rejecting His messenger.

He is addressed at once by the title which we have already seen to be characteristic of his prophecy: "Son of man," says the Voice, "stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee." The title given him is itself a proof that the people to whom he goes have lost their special distinctive place with God, but at the same time that if Israel will not hear, grace will not be thwarted in its object. The message will only go out the more widely, and indeed, with a deeper, sweeter, fuller message, as we abundantly prove to-day. This title is in itself the foreshadow of One who when standing in the midst of Israel in a day which was then future, would adopt it for His own. The Son of Man would be the Seeker of men, and Himself a man in all the conditions of humanity—Himself the perfect, because unfallen, Man. The Lord's adoption of this title is, however, distinct in its significance from the use of it by God in His address to the prophet. God never addresses Christ as the Son of Man, but as His own Son; man indeed, but as it is said in Zechariah: "The Man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. xiii. 7). But the Lord's adoption of it for Himself is peculiar, and characteristic of the uniqueness of His personality. Who but Himself could say, "I the Son of man?" No *mere* man could claim distinctively to be what all men are. Man indeed He is thoroughly, nor only man, but Son of man, entering into manhood by the door ordained, by its lowliness, to hide pride from man. To the weakness of infancy He is no stranger. He grows and learns as other men, His kinship with whom this name discloses; yet while it discloses this, it distinguishes Him none the less from all else among men—distinctive even because of its universality; for who could distinguish himself by a title that was not distinctive? He was thus Son of man in some sense peculiar to Himself —Son of man, while much more than this. With Ezekiel the term speaks, on the other hand, simply of his identification with men. He is not *the* son of man, but reminded of the lowliness of his condition, while at the same time this only magnifies the grace which has taken him up; and thus also there is in him a peculiar suitability to convey the message with which he is charged—not an angel, but with human sympathies, and a human intelligence

rebelled against me: they and their [i] fathers have transgressed against me unto this very day. And the children are [j] impudent of face and hard of [k] heart. I am sending thee unto them, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord * Jehovah. And they, [l] whether they will hear or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall [m] know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of man, be [n] not afraid of them and be not afraid of their words, though [o] briers and thorns are with thee and thou dwellest among scorpions: be not afraid of their words and be not dismayed at their faces, for they are a rebellious house. And thou shalt [p] speak my words unto them whether they will hear or whether they will forbear: for they are [most] rebellious. And

* Hebrew, *Adonai.*

i *cf.* Ezr. 9. 7. Jer. 3. 25.
j ch. 3. 7. *cf.* ch. 16. 3. *cf.* Is. 48. 4.
k *cf.* Is.46.12. *cf.* Zech. 7. 12. *cf.* ch. 11.19.
l ch. 3. 11. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.
m ch. 33. 33. *cf.* Lk.10.11.
n *cf.* Jer. 1. 17, 18. Mt. 10. 28.
o *cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 6, 7.
p Jer. 1. 7, 8, 17, 18. *cf.* Acts 23. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16.

acquired and exercised amid human conditions; himself thus the proof of the heart of God behind the hand of Him who is love and cannot change His nature, even when He is executing judgment.

The feebleness of the instrument is recognized, and thus calls forth Jehovah's might to sustain it. We see this at the outset here: "Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak with thee." And not only so, but the Spirit enters into him to make him stand. He cannot even listen to the message in that prostrate condition which, while it may rightly express the nothingness of the creature in the presence of God, at the same time cannot suitably express the divine grace towards him. We see this everywhere in the history of the prophets, as notably in the prophet Daniel, and as again also in the case of John the beloved. God cannot utter His thoughts to one prostrate in the dust before Him. This does not suit the blessed Speaker; and this is already the foretaste of that which enables us to say we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." That cry is not yet come in Ezekiel's case, belonging as he does to a previous dispensation, but none the less the spirit of fear is bidden to depart, in order that the divine communications may have their suited character; for if God is enwrapping Himself in the cloud of judgment, nevertheless there is, as we have seen, the manifestation of One to whom judgment is a strange work, and those iris hues of promise are about the cloud. The messenger must in his spirit reflect this, that he may be fit as a messenger; and whether they hear or whether they forbear, the prophet must be witness in his own person that if "justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne," "mercy and truth" yet "go before His face."

But Israel have, in fact, already thoroughly proved themselves, and are no other (except in the privileges which they have perverted) than the nations around. Thus the divine Speaker marks them here: "I send thee to the children of Israel," He says—to Gentiles—for they are none other than these. They are but "the rebellious who have rebelled against Me. They and their fathers have transgressed against Me unto this very day." Thus they are children as "impudent of face" as "hard of heart." Their heart spoke in their faces in such a way that there could be no more concealment, and God sends

thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee. Be not [q] thou rebellious like that rebellious house: [r] open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

And I looked, and behold, a [s] hand was put forth toward me, and lo, a roll of a [t] book therein, and he spread it before me, and it was [u] written within and without. And there were written in it [v] lamentations and mournings and woe. And he said unto me, Son of man, [w] eat that thou findest. Eat this roll, and go, speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat this roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. And I ate it, and it was in my mouth as [x] honey for sweetness.

q *cf.* Acts 26. 19, 20. *cf.* Jonah 1. 3. etc.
r Rev. 10. 9. *cf.* Jer. 15. 16.
s Jer. 1. 9. *cf.* ch. 10. 7, 8.
t Rev. 10. 10.
u *cf.* Rev. 5. 1, 7, 8.
v *cf.* Jer. 36. 4, 23, 32. *cf.* Isa. 3. 11.
w ch. 2. 8. *cf.* Mt. 4. 4. *cf.* Job 23. 12.
x *cf.* Ps. 19. 10. with Rev. 10. 9, 10.

to them in the full recognition of this, putting against their blasphemous words the speech of the Unchangeable whom they have refused. Thus they shall know, if it be learned by the judgment executed, that there has been a prophet among them. Among such a people does the prophet dwell; as briars and thorns wound and entangle those who come in contact with them, as scorpions poisonous in their sting; yet he who has been admitted to see the glory of Jehovah need not be afraid among them. How unseemly indeed would be any fear of man on the part of such an one, and how ill would he represent the majesty of Him with whom they had to do! How ill, alas, do we represent Him if in any wise we manifest this, into whose mouths God has put a sweeter message, and to whom the glory of the Lord has been more wondrously revealed than even as Ezekiel saw it here!

And now the prophet is instructed to make thoroughly his own that which he is commissioned to proclaim amongst them. The vision character of what is here, one would think, ought to be plain to us, and an indication of the character of much that is to follow in the prophecy. "I looked," he says, "and behold a hand was put forth toward me, and lo a roll of a book therein: and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without, and there were written in it lamentations and mournings and woe. And he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest. Eat this roll, and go, speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat this roll." The meaning is perfectly clear, which any literal construction would rather obscure than add any force to. Again we are reminded of the visions of the Apocalypse. The roll of the book is written within and without, which does not simply speak of the fulness of its contents, as it is taken, but rather, one would say, speaks of things outward and manifest as well as of things of a deeper and more hidden nature. That which is manifest is needed by a condition of soul that can see nothing except that which is external; while, on the other hand, there are things within, which for those who have hearts to realize, are beyond all this. Even so for the prophet himself there is something that answers to this; for while what was manifest was simply matter for "lamentations and mournings and woe," yet in the mouth of the prophet there was as the taste of honey for sweetness, and this corresponds with what we have already seen throughout the vision, where the judgment does not stand alone, but the glory of the Lord is revealed in it, and in result, the accomplish-

And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel and speak with my words unto them. For thou art not sent to a people of [y] obscure language and difficult speech,* but to the house of Israel; not to many peoples of obscure language and of difficult speech, whose words thou canst not understand. Had I sent thee unto them, they [z] would hearken unto thee: but the [a] house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for none of them will hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are [b] hard of forehead and stiff of heart. Behold, I have made thy [c] face hard against their faces, and thy forehead hard against their foreheads. As an adamant, harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their faces, for they are a rebellious house. And he said unto me, Son of man, [d] all my words which I shall speak unto thee, receive in thy heart and hear with thine ears, and go, get thee to the [e] captivity to the children of thy people, and speak unto them and tell them, Thus saith the Lord † Jehovah—whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.

y *cf.* Is. 1. 3. *cf.* Jno. 1. 11.

z *cf.* Acts 28. 28.

a *cf.* Lk. 4. 23-27. *cf.* Jer. 2. 13.

b Is. 48. 4. Ex. 32. 9. Deut. 31. 27.

c Jer. 1. 18. *cf.* Acts 4. 13.

d Jer. 26. 2. *cf.* Acts 20. 27. *cf.* Rev. 22. 18, 19.

e ch. 1. 1.

* Literally, "deep of lip, and heavy of tongue." † *Adonai.*

ment of counsels which are in His heart and which display His heart. Alas, the message might seem such as if it must be addressed to peoples of obscure language and difficult speech, to men of foreign tongues, strangers such as those among whom they were already being scattered. No, these were strangers in heart alone, all the more terrible in their enmity and misconception of the words of God, which above all should have been familiar. The difficulty of foreign speech might have been overcome, but here was a difficulty which no words that the prophet could utter would overcome. "But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for none of them will hearken unto Me." There was the stubbornness of a condition upon which mercy itself could wait no longer, and the prophet's brow must be made hard against their brazen front, and his face against their faces. Already, the wrath to be poured out was foreshown in their condition, captives as they were to the heathen around them, who were themselves more capable of hearing the words of God, had they been addressed to them, than those who had been nursed up with them. It is the solemn lesson which we are constantly receiving, that not the lack of opportunity condemns men to judgment, but the fearful mystery of hearts that depart from the living God, who themselves invite the unwilling judgment, and can be constrained by nothing but the doom which in their case is the last touch of mercy which they are capable of receiving.

Sec. 3.

The prophet has been now qualified and energized for his work. He is accordingly inducted into it: "The Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the sound of a great rushing, Blessed be the glory of Jehovah from its place; and the sound of the wings of the living creatures that kissed one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them was even the sound of a great rushing."

SECTION 3 (Chap. iii. 12-27.)

Set apart to be Israel's watchman, the voice of God to the people.

And the * Spirit [f] lifted me up, and I heard behind me the sound of a great [g] rushing [saying], [h] Blessed be the glory of Jehovah from its place; and the sound of the wings of the living creatures that kissed one another,† and the sound of the wheels beside them, [was] even the sound of a great rushing. And the * Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went in [i] bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, and the [j] hand of Jeho-

[f] ch. 8. 3. Acts 8. 39.
[g] *cf.* ch. 1. 24. *cf.* Acts 2. 2.
[h] *cf.* Is. 6. 3. *cf.* Heb. 1. 6.
[i] *cf.* Jer. 1. 6. *cf.* Jer. 9. 1. *cf.* Phil 3.18.
[j] 2 Ki. 3. 15. ch. 37. 1.

* The article is omitted. † Literally, "a woman her sister."

This sound is heard *behind* him, at his back, because in the path in which God leads, the movement of the living creatures, the whole machinery of government, as it were, follows him who is in it, and thus becomes articulate in praise of the outshining glory, whatever the place from which it shines. It was seen, in fact, now, not in what had been its dwelling place upon earth, not in Israel's temple consecrated to it for so many generations, neither yet in its own proper home in heaven, but in an activity to which not simply its own nature calls it, but the needs of man, of the creature, and thus of creation everywhere, which if touched in one point is touched in all. It is everywhere the creation of God, and He is manifested in it. Thus it can take no place, but its glory shines from it so as to awaken (not, alas, the praise of man now fallen, but) the praise of all that is symbolized here by the living creatures and the moving wheels upon the earth, which will at last utter His praise so that it shall be re-echoed throughout the universe.

Here is again another connecting link with the book of Revelation, where it is said of these same living creatures that "they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. iv. 8). Beautiful it is to see the perfect harmony here as their wings, in the emphatic language of the prophet, "kiss" one another. On earth the pall of night may be hanging, and the lightnings quiver from the threatening storm; nevertheless here there is no storm, no conflict, but emphatically peace; the wings taking on, according to the Hebrew here, even a tender feminine character, as that of "a woman with her sister"—harmony and subjection united in one, or, in fact, but one and the same thing.

So, impelled by the same energy, the prophet says: "The Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went in the bitterness of my spirit, and the hand of Jehovah was strong upon me." The bitterness of God's judgment upon His people is still felt; and this is no discord, when we know the heart that is behind the judgment—not slackened by it, but rather impelled; the anger against the rebellion of the people of God burning all the more within him who realizes that these are the people of God, and that God is robbed of His glory in them. The hand of Jehovah, of the unchangeable One, known as the Unchangeable in His very covenant name, this hand is strong upon him to enable him for the execution of the commission which has been given him.

Thus he goes to those of the captivity at Tel-abib, who dwelt by the river Chebar. Tel-abib means "the mound of green corn." How vividly is pictured in this name the hopes springing up afresh, as it were, in this land of captivity —a mere green mound though it be by the waters of the desolating river. Here

vah was strong upon me. And I came to [them of] the captivity at Tel-abib that dwelt by the river Chebar, and to where they dwelt, and I [k]sat there astonished among them seven days. And it came to pass at the end of seven days that the [l]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have given thee as a [m]watchman to the house of Israel, and thou shalt [n]hear the word from my mouth and [o]warn them from me. If I say unto the wicked, [p]Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him [q]not warning, and speakest not to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, he, the wicked, [r]shall die in his iniquity, but his [s]blood will I require at thy hand. But [t]if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast [u]delivered thy soul. And when a [v]righteous man turneth from his righteousness and commit-

k cf. Dan. 4. 19.
l ch. 1. 3, etc.
m ch. 33 7-9. *cf.* Is. 21. 11. *cf.* Is. 52. 8. *cf.* Heb. 13. 17. *cf.* Acts 20. 28.
n cf. Acts 4. 20.
o cf. Jer. 6. 17. *cf.* Col 1. 28.
p cf. Gen. 2. 17. *cf.* Deut. 28. 45.
q cf. Jer. 8. 11.
r cf. ch. 18. 4, etc.
s ctr. Acts 20. 26. *cf.* Acts 18. 6.
t ctr. Gen. 4. 9.

u cf. Lk. 17. 1-3. *v* ch. 18. 24; ch. 33. 12, 13; *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 1; *cf.* Jno. 10. 38.

they have come into a land of vagabondage like Cain of old, to build their city and rest, if they may rest. The sight smites upon the prophet's heart and overwhelms him with astonishment seven days. How complete is the ignorance, how puerile the self-confidence of this hope against hope, but which has no faith for its support! Tel-abib by the river Chebar is the very sign of their condition, around which the circling storm of the divine wrath is moving for its overthrow.

The prophet is allowed full time for the realization of these true human feelings; the weight of his charge not pressing him unduly, but permitting the perfect realization of it all in his soul before, at last, he takes it up. Only at the end of the seven days does the word of Jehovah come to him, saying: "Son of man, I have given thee as a watchman to the house of Israel, and thou shalt hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from Me." But we see in what follows that as a nation there is no hope at all. The case as to them is closed. His mission, for the mass, is only to declare the certainty of the judgment coming; but which is, because God is in it, a discriminative judgment, which separates a remnant of those who do hear from the unheeding mass.

The divine words are now, however, first of all to himself, set in charge as God's watchman for the people to put every individual soul upon his responsibility before God, his own responsibility remaining unaffected, whatever the result or apparent want of result. Warned or unwarned, the wicked, obstinate in his wickedness, will die; he also who turns from his righteousness to commit iniquity, whether or not the warnings were uttered which should have preserved him in the path of righteousness. This is an important point for us at all times: so apt as we are to argue from mere results which can never rightly be our guide, as results cannot precede but follow, and cannot affect the question of duty for those who are to walk by faith and not by sight, who are to be in the divine Hand for the execution of His purposes with whom the result is.

Let us notice here that, in all that which is now before us, we are upon the plane of God's outward, manifest government, so conspicuous and fitting in the prophecy of Ezekiel. Thus the death threatened to the wicked is not simply

teth iniquity,* and I lay a [w] stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin,* and his righteousness † which he hath done shall [x] not be remembered, but his [y] blood will I require at thy hand. And if thou [z] warn the righteous man that the righteous sin not, and he sinneth not, he shall certainly live; for he hath [a] taken warning, and thou hast [b] delivered thy soul.

And the [c] hand of Jehovah was there upon me, and he said unto me, Arise, go [d] forth into the plain, and there I will talk with thee. And I arose and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the [e] glory of Jehovah stood there, [f] like the glory which I saw by the river Chebar, and I [g] fell on my face. And the Spirit entered into me and [h] set me upon my feet, and he spake with me and said unto me, Go, [i] shut thyself within thy house.

* Two different words. † Or, righteous acts; literally "righteousnesses."

w *cf.* Jas. 1. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 8.

x *ctr.* Heb. 6. 10 with Heb. 8. 12.

y ver. 18.

z *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 13.

a *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 9–11.

b ver. 19.

c ch. 1. 3.

d ch. 8. 4.

e ch. 1. 28.

f ch. 1. 1. ch. 10. 15, etc.

g *cf.* Rev. 1. 17. *cf.* Mt. 17. 6.

h ch. 2. 2. *cf.* Zech 4. 1.

i *cf.* Jno. 12. 36.

that under which we all are; nor, is it, as commonly supposed, eternal death as the doom of every unrepentant soul; but it is a removal from earth, under the government of God, which even for the present makes for blessing to the upright with Him, as the apostle also tells us, that "godliness hath the promise of the life that now is," as well as "of that which is to come." The deeper question is not raised here—it is not what is put before us; not even as the law raised it, appealing to the outward government of God which levels all pretension to righteousness on the part of any, and shuts up to grace alone, of which the law is everywhere the handmaid.

This charge being given him, the prophet is now summoned into the valley that Jehovah may speak with him. The word used here is "cleft," though it is sometimes used for a plain, as in Genesis xi. 2, "plain of Shinar;" yet even there seems to have reference to what is its strict meaning, as a cleft between the mountains. It is used for the valley of Jericho, the deep Jordan-cleft through which it enters the Dead Sea. Its significance here should be plain. In all that we have seen, God is cleaving indeed the mountains of man's pride, bringing in a breach upon all that seems most stable, wherein those who are really His own are made to recognize a judgment which abases them before Him, but where the glory of God can appear to them, as now it does to the prophet. One must ever be abased in order to be exalted; and because of what we are, we must abide in that abasement in order to abide in the exaltation itself. God thus abides for us in all that He is, as the apostle realized after his being taken into the blessedness of the paradise of God, the third heaven; yet, because of the flesh in him, needing the thorn for the flesh, which love itself could not remove, while it could enable him to glory in it.

Prostrate the prophet falls again; for who can stand before this holy, holy, holy God? But again the Spirit raises and sets him upon his feet, and with an injunction now, which at first seems almost in contradiction to the call he has received, but which is in fact to guide him in obedience to it. He is to shut himself in his house. There is no readiness on the people's part to receive the divine communication. Thus their condition will, as he is told, put bands upon him, and he can only speak amongst these obdurate people as the

And thou, son of man, behold they shall put [j] bands upon thee, and shall bind thee therewith, and thou shalt not go out among them: and I will make thy [k] tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt [l] not be to them a reprover, for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will [m] open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord * Jehovah: He that [n] heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear; for they are a [o] rebellious house.

j *cf.* Jer. 38.6.
k *cf.* ch. 24.27, *cf.* ch. 33.22.
l *cf.* Mk. 8.11. 12.
m *cf.* ch. 24. 27. *cf.* ch. 29.21. ch. 33. 22. *cf.* Isa. 50. 4.
n Mt. 13. 9. *cf.* Rev. 2. 7, etc.
o ver. 9. *cf.* Acts 7. 51–53.

SECTION 4 (Chaps. iv., v.)

Delivered to the nations as worse than they: the four signs.

1 (1-3): First sign: God Himself in the siege against Jerusalem.

1. And thou, son of man, take thee a [p] brick, and lay it before thee, and portray upon it a city—Jerusalem; and lay [q] siege against it, and build forts † against, it and cast up a mound against it, and set camps against it, and place battering rams against it round about, and take thou unto thee an [r] iron plate,‡ and set it for a

p *cf.* Gen. 11. 3 with Isa. 9. 10.
q *cf.* Lk. 19. 43.
r *cf.* Jer. 1. 18, 19.

* *Adonai.* † Or, "a fort." ‡ Or, "pan."

way is opened for him irresistibly, the Spirit of God refusing to be hindered. We cannot but realize that what was true of Israel in that day is true now of the world at large; and that is why the apostle says that we must "redeem the time," (Eph. v. 16)—"the opportunity," as it really is—take the opening or opportunities which God makes in speaking His message amongst men, "because the days are evil." For it is He who "openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." And while the commission of His grace is world-wide, yet he who would be fruitful in it must realize entire dependence, and watch for the doors that open under the Hand that guides.

Sec. 4.

1. The language of parable is now taken up again, the significance of which is so fully declared to us by the Lord in relation to His own use of it (Matt. xiii. 13). It is only the remnant from whom anything can now be expected. The call of the parable is to "him who hath ears to hear." And thus we have now four signs, in which the prophet is to address himself to those about him.

The first sign is a simple, but what a significant one! He is instructed to take a brick,* and lay it before him, and portray upon it a city—Jerusalem, in fact, and lay siege against it, and place battering rams against it round about. All simple enough, surely, in view of what was actually threatening the people at that time. But there is a deeper significance: "Take thou unto thee an iron plate, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city, and set thy face against it, and it shall be in siege; even thou shalt lay siege against it." A sign indeed this, for the prophet is the representative of God Himself, and it is God who is at work through these strange hostile hands of His people's enemies. There is, as it were, indeed a wall of iron between the prophet and the

* The brick may suggest Babylon, as the tower of Babel (Gen. xi. 3) was made of bricks. It would thus suggest that Jerusalem had morally become assimilated to Babylon, and therefore would be subjugated by it.—S. R.

wall of iron between thee and the city, and set thy [s] face against it, and it shall be in siege, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This [is] a [t] sign to the house of Israel.

2 (4-8): The second sign: The bearing of their iniquity.

2. And [u] lie thou on thy side,* the left one, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. [According to] the [v] number of the days that thou liest upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. Even I have appointed thee the years of their iniquity according to the number of the days, [w] three hundred and ninety days, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And

* Or, "thy left side."

[s] *cf.* ch. 6. 2.
[t] *cf.* ch. 12. 3-7, 11. ch. 24. 24. *cf.* Is. 8. 18. *ctr.* Lk 2.12.
[u] *cf.* Is. 20. 2, 3. *cf.* Jer. 27.2. *cf.* Jer. 28. 10-14.
[v] *cf.* Num. 14. 33, 34. *cf.* Dan. 9. 24-27.
[w] *cf.* 2 Chron. 10. 16 with 2 Chron. 36. 17-21.

city. The separation which their sins had caused is not too vividly pictured here. But more: for separation from God cannot be with any indifference on the part of Him who is the living God, ever moving in the activity of His own nature; and if He separates Himself from the people it is not simply to cast them off, but to "lay siege" Himself against them. In Jerusalem centre the hopes of the people and the promises of God. For Jerusalem to be in siege, and God, as seen in the attitude of the prophet, Himself to lay siege against it, is indeed a sign to the house of Israel which should stir them to the very depth.

2. But another sign quickly follows. He is to lie upon his side, the left one, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. He is to bear this 390 days, each day of penalty corresponding to a year of their iniquity. But this is not all. When he has accomplished this, he is to lie again upon his side, the right one, and now bear the iniquity of the house of Judah 40 days, each day once more given for a year. The siege of Jerusalem is through all, we may say, the object-lesson, and as he lies under the burden of their sin, his arm is to be uncovered, and his prophecy to be against it. He is not to turn from one side to the other until the days of the siege are accomplished.

What we have here has been a cause of great perplexity to all commentators. The separation between the house of Israel and the house of Judah has been supposed to refer, and quite naturally, to the two kingdoms, of Judah and of the ten tribes; and thus the 390 years have been attempted to be applied to the separate kingdom of Israel, already in the prophet's time long and completely overthrown. The separate kingdom of the ten tribes lasted about 254 years, and that of Judah about 134 years, at least, afterwards. The lying upon the left side, which, according to the common use of the right hand for the south, might refer to the position of the northern kingdom (and which probably does refer to this), yet if it be taken as applying exclusively to Israel, as separate from Judah, breaks down entirely. There were no 390 years of the separate kingdom, and these cannot be read into it in any intelligible way. If you carry them back from the taking of Samaria by the Assyrians and the deportation of the people, they would reach into the times of the Judges; and thus it has been contended that the number of years can be only allegorically significant. This, however, surely seems impossible as an interpretation of what is here. The 390 days, a day for a year, is the time of the remembering of the sins of the people, which the prophet, as representative of the remnant according to God (and in this way inferring the attitude of God Himself), has been so long suffering under. The allegorical reckoning of the number 390 itself is hard to make out, and in order to justify it at all,

when thou hast accomplished these, thou shalt also lie upon thy side,* [z] the right one, the second time, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah [y] forty days; each [z] day for a year have I given thee. And thou shalt

[x] *cf.* Ps. 60. 7.
[y] *cf.* Jer. 30. 11.
[z] ver. 5

* Or, "thy right side."

the 40 years of Judah have sometimes been added to these, in order to reproduce, as it were, the 430 years which was the limit of Egyptian bondage; but such a reference confounds two periods which are certainly meant here to be distinguished, as well as the connection of the house of Israel with the one, and that of Judah with the other. But the years also must surely be years of sin, of actual sin which is provoking the punishment, and no 430 years have ever been marked out in this way at all.

What then are we to say with regard to it? It is plain that only the separate notice of the house of Judah here seems to require the application of the 390 years to the separate Ephraimitic kingdom. If this can be otherwise explained, then there is no reason why the 390 years should not be those of divine forbearance as to the nation as a whole; and if we date them from the separation of the kingdoms under Jeroboam to the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, we have, as closely as possible, exactly this time. This separation was the break-up, under God, of a time of unexampled prosperity, and it was the break-out of man's will at the same time; judgment thus already beginning while yet the long-suffering of God tempered it during all this period. The separation of the northern kingdom may thus have fully its place here, and be that which, as it were, weighed heavily on that side the nation as a whole, which never recovered itself from that great disaster. It is striking also that the actual siege of Jerusalem lasted for about the 390 days of the prophet's burden. It lasted from the 10th day of the 10th month of the 9th year of Zedekiah to the 9th day of the 4th month of his 11th year; and this, says Schroeder, "can very simply be made to correspond by making a deduction for the temporary raising of the siege on account of the Egyptians" (Jer. xxxvii. 5). The reference to the actual siege of Jerusalem is thus strictly in conformity with the actual fact.

With regard to the forty years of the house of Judah, the difficulties have been considered great. The symbolism of numbers has been very naturally invoked in this case, and there is no need at all to deny that there is a significance of this sort in them. Nevertheless it is impossible to make this the whole matter. But where are these 40 years then? The 390 having already run on from the beginning of Rehoboam's reign to the fall of the city (thus including all Israel, not the ten tribes only), makes it impossible to put the period for Judah anywhere among these. It has been thought, therefore, that we must go back for them to the time of Solomon. Solomon's reign was just forty years; it was a time, it is said, in which Judah had necessarily a special prominence. It was also a time in which the remarkable prosperity which God gave them tested them as to their real condition. The departure of the people into idolatry, Solomon himself drawn into it through his wives, was the sad answer to a test like this. Thus, it is considered, that this is what is pointed to, as significant of their whole history, and through which their captivity was already assured.

But, as already said, this application is entirely against the order here, in which the prophet is distinctly told that when he had accomplished the 390

set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt [a] prophesy against it. And, behold, I lay [b] bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn from the one side to the other, [c] until thou hast accomplished the days of thy siege.

[a] *cf.* ch. 34. 12.
[b] ch. 3. 25.
[c] *cf.* Lk. 1. 20.

days, each standing for a year, he was to lie again upon his side, the right one, to bear the iniquity of the house of Judah. This is emphasized, then, as coming after the injunction concerning the house of Israel. If, therefore, this period is to be reckoned chronologically at all (as everybody would say it should, but for the difficulty of finding it) we must go forward and not backward for its discovery.

Now it is undeniable that from the time of the destruction of the temple to its rebuilding, according to Ezra iii. 8, there elapse just 40 years; and they have reference distinctly to Judah, whose captivity was then at an end.* The ten tribes never did return. Judah, it is true, only partially; nevertheless the temple was built once more, and the city; and here they were permitted to abide that according to the divine promise the Messiah might come to them. Accordingly the post-captivity prophets, especially Haggai and Zechariah, are full of the coming of Christ. Their very names point to this. Haggai means "festive;" Zechariah, "Jehovah has remembered." Those also who come forward to rebuild the temple, as Zerubbabel, the prince of Judah, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, are, according to the latter prophet, the double type of Christ as Priest and King. Thus the air is full of the rays of the coming dawn, and the very names breathe the music of it. All seems prepared; and in their prophecies the present is the prelude of a glorious future into which it seemed ready to develop. All seems prepared—except, alas, once more the people; and here the significance of the number puts its impress upon the result. Those 40 years of their captivity should indeed have convinced them where their only hope lay; and under the solemn teaching of men like Ezekiel, they should surely have received the sentence of death in themselves that they should not trust in themselves, but in God who raiseth the dead. To such grace as is in God, had they had hearts to receive it, no power upon earth could be an impediment. But the issue proved how little, in fact, they had learnt by the long story of their past; and Malachi, with whom the voice of prophecy closes, points once more to the needed separation of a remnant, to whom alone the Sun of Righteousness should arise with healing upon His wings. After this, therefore, their history is a mere blank. The prophetic

* The text of the notes present a difficulty which cannot be solved. The reference to Ezra iii. 8 does not seem to help matters. Our beloved brother is no longer here to explain his meaning. It has therefore been thought best to let the text stand as he wrote it, and to add this note.

The following is suggested as a possible explanation in line with the author's thought: The *first* deportation to Babylon was in B. C. 606 (2 Kings xxiv. 14). The *second* and main deportation was in B. C. 598 (2 Kings xxv. 11). This was probably when Ezekiel was carried away—Ezek. i. 1, 2. The Temple was destroyed (Jer. lii. 28, 29) in the *third* deportation, B. C. 588. There seem to be two ways of counting the 70 years' captivity: from the *first* deportation, 606 B. C., to the Edict of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1), B. C. 536; and from the destruction of the Temple, B. C. 588, to its rebuilding, B. C. 518. Thus there is a *general* as well as a specific meaning to these 70 years. If we consider them as general, not from one date to the other, we have, then, from 598 to 588, ten years in which Judah is not *completely* in captivity; and twenty years from 538 to 518, during which they are in their land. If these 30 years are deducted from the 70 we have the 40 of *complete* captivity which the prophet expressed.—S. R.

3 (9-17): The third sign: Defilement instead of holiness.

3. And [d] take thou unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and spelt, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof [according to] the [e] number of the days that thou liest upon thy side; three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. And thy food that thou shalt eat shall be by [f] weight, twenty shekels a day. From time to time shalt thou eat it. And thou shalt drink [g] water by measure, the sixth part of a hin. From time to time

[d] *cf.* Dan. 1. 12. *cf.* Dan. 10. 3.
[e] vers. 4, 5.
[f] ch. 12. 18, 19.
[g] *cf.* Jer. 2. 13. *cfr.* Jno. 4. 13, 14.

voices cease; then a long silence, and the 40 years have proved, as far as the people are concerned, the determination of the whole matter.

Christ comes indeed, as we know; comes to His own according to the promise, but only to be decisively rejected by them, so that they are finally scattered for the whole time in which, already for so long, the Jebusite, "the treader down," has held Jerusalem. Thus the significance of these 40 years is unmistakable; they are seen to be at once symbolical and chronological, and filling their proper place with regard to the 390 years at the close of which they come. There is no contradiction between a symbolical and a chronological import. God is constantly showing His control over human history in giving the facts of history such deeper significance.

3. The third sign follows—some features of which corroborate the view which has just been taken. The prophet is to take wheat and barley and beans and lentils and millet and spelt, and put this miscellaneous material into one vessel, and make bread of it according to the number of the days that he has been lying upon his side. But, notice, the limit is plainly given here as that of 390 days only, not 430 as we should have imagined. Thus there is a distinction of some sort plainly between this period and the 40 days following it. It says, "390 days shalt thou eat thereof." This was, as has already been said, probably at least, the exact time of the siege of the city, which according to the first sign given has fundamental relation to all that is here. The siege of the city is, on the part of the people, their bearing the iniquity of the previous time. Yet, as we know, this is not the whole of the matter. Scattered then among the nations by which they were led captive, they are, in fact, still bearing their iniquity before God; and this extension of the character of the siege to the time following is intimated in what we have here; for the unclean bread which they eat under the pressure of the siege is to be eaten also among the nations whither Jehovah drives them. Thus, while the days of the siege are distinguished in one sense from the period following, yet, in another, they are connected with it. Thus, the 40 years are distinguished from the time of siege, while yet some of the character of that time still attached to them. All seems thus plain enough; and that which at first sight is a difficulty, brings in its solution the solution of other difficulties.

This third sign, indeed, shows the state of the people more than the distresses of the siege themselves do, for here is signified the destruction of their sanctification as a separate people. This polluted bread that is eaten among the Gentiles is no longer the consequence of being shut up within the walls of the besieged city. As we have already seen, they can have, after all, their Telabib by the desolating "river," and rally, alas, all too soon, from the hopelessness of such a condition as the siege of the city implies. But their new hopes

shalt thou drink [it]. And thou shalt eat it [as] barley cake, and thou shalt [h] bake it in their sight with dung that cometh out of man. Jehovah hath even said, [i] So shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean among the [j] nations whither I will drive them.

And I said, Ah, Lord Jehovah, behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for [k] from my youth up, even until now, have I not eaten of that which [l] dieth of itself or of that which is torn, neither hath there come [m] abominable flesh into my mouth. And he said unto me, Behold, I [n] give thee dung of cattle for dung of man, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith. And he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I am [o] breaking the staff of bread in Jerusalem; and they shall eat bread by weight and in anxiety, and they shall drink water by measure and with astonishment, because bread and water shall [p] fail them, and they shall be dismayed one with another and [q] pine away in their iniquity.

h *cf.* Isa. 36. 12.
ctr. Ex. 19. 6.
ctr. Lev. 20. 25, 26.
i *cf.* Deut. 28. 64 68.
j *cf.* Hos. 9. 3.
k *cf.* Acts 10. 14.
l Ex. 22. 31. Lev. 11. 39, 40.
m Lev. 11. 11. Is. 65. 4.
ctr. Phil. 4. 8.
n *cf.* Lev. 10. 19, 20.
o Lev. 26. 26. Ps. 105. 16. Is. 3. 1.
cf. Amos 8. 11-13.
p *ctr.* Jer. 14. 13-16.
q Lev. 26. 39 Deut. 28. 47, 48.

only reveal more deeply their condition, despising as they do the chastening of the Lord, and building themselves up on hopes which, instead of encouraging them to a true separation of heart to God, practically reduce them in God's sight to the level of the nations around them. In fact, the contamination of contact with the heathen, in more ways than their captivity would necessarily involve (for an Ezekiel and a Daniel were among the captives too), is shown, as we have already seen, most signally on their return from captivity. If after their return they learned to build themselves up in a proud isolation, such as we find in the Rabbinism which soon began, and which found its perfect expression in the pretentious hypocrisy of Pharisaism, this was at the farthest extreme from any return to God. Their bread, in fact, become most thoroughly defiled, when, instead of the precious Word which God had given them, they taught "for commandments, the doctrines of men," and once more substituted for that Word by which men live, "statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby man could not live." For a remnant among those that had returned from Babylon it was a period in which there was a famine of the word of God itself; and their association with those that had returned from the captivity must have become a thing less endurable than the captivity itself.

4. A fourth sign closes the series here. As in the last we have already got beyond the siege of the city, so in the present we are manifestly beyond it, but with no revocation of the sentence upon them. Ezekiel was now to take a sharp sword, using it as a barber's razor to put upon himself the brand of shame upon his head and beard—thus manifestly in the sight of all. This was forbidden to the priest (which Ezekiel was), and thus the loss of the priestly character is made apparent. But this enforced shaving of the hair is used with a further significance, to show the fate of Israel's scattered multitudes, thus smitten. A third part was to be burnt in the midst of the city when the days of the siege were fulfilled, most evidently referring to the slaughter of the multitude when the city was taken. A third part was to be smitten about with the sword, the sword drawn out after them in the land of their captivity itself. The final third part was to be scattered to the wind, and of these, only a few in number were to be bound in the prophet's skirts for preservation;

4 (1-4): The fourth sign: reduced to a few.

4. And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp [r]sword, [as] a barber's [s]razor shalt thou take it unto thee, and cause it to pass over [t]thy head and over thy beard, and thou shalt take [u]balances, and weigh, and divide [the hair]. A [v]third part shalt thou [w]burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled; and thou shalt take a third part [and] [x]smite about it with a sword; and a third part shalt thou [y]scatter to the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them: and thou shalt take thereof a [z]few in number and bind them in thy skirts; and thou shalt take of [a]these again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. Therefrom shall fire go forth to [b]all the house of Israel.

5 (5-17): The summing up of judgment.

5. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, This is Jerusalem. I [c]set her in the midst of the nations, and [the] lands were round about her, and she hath [d]rebelled against my judgments for wickedness [e]beyond the nations, and against my statutes more than the lands which are round about her. For my judgments they have [f]despised, and have not [g]walked in my statutes. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because ye have been [h]turbulent more than the nations which are round about you, [and] have not walked in my statutes nor kept my judgments, nor have [even] done [i]according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you, therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I, even I, am [j]against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the [k]sight of the nations, and I will do in thee that which I have [l]not done, and the like of which I will not do any more, because of all thine abominations. Therefore [m]fathers shall eat [their] sons in the midst of thee, and sons shall eat their fathers, and I will execute judgments in thee, and [n]scatter the whole remnant of thee to all the winds.

r Isa. 51. 19.
s cf. Is. 7. 20.
t ctr. Lev. 21. 5 with ch. 44. 20.
u cf. Is. 40. 12, 15.
v cf. 1 Sam. 2. 3.
w cf. Dan. 5. 27.
x cf. Zech. 13. 8, 9. ver. 12. ch. 4. 1, 8.
y ch. 4. 8, 9. Jer 7. 20.
z Lev. 26. 25. ver. 17.
a Lev 26. 33. Deut. 4. 27. Jer. 9. 16.
b Lev. 26. 22. Deut. 28. 62. *cf.* Is. 1. 9.
c cf. Jer. 41. 2. *cf.* Jer. 44 28.
d cf. Jer. 9. 26. *cf.* ch. 22. 18-22.
e cf. Deut. 32. 8. *cf.* Ps. 48. 2.
f cf. Is. 1. 2.
g cf. Mt. 11. 21-24. *cf.* ch. 36. 20. *cf.* ch. 16. 47.
h cf. Prov. 1. 25.
i Is. 2. 5.
j cf. Jer. 2. 10, 11. ch. 16. 47. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1.
k ctr. Mi. 4. 5.
l cf. Am. 3. 1. *ctr.* Rom. 8. 31.
m ctr. Ps. 98. 2.
n cf. Dan. 9. 12. *cf.* Mt. 24. 21.
m Lev 26. 29. Jer. 19. 9.
n Lev. 26. 33. Deut 4. 27. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 1.

while again even of these also some are taken and cast into the midst of the fire to be burned. It is the awful fire of the wrath of God which is thus going forth to all the house of Israel. The significance here is so plain that it hardly needs comment. There is, as we see, the sparing of a feeble remnant—alas, how feeble now! But this is all that even the voice of mercy has any longer to say to them.

5. We have now the summing up of the judgment in general, along with the solemn declaration of that for which the judgment comes. Jerusalem is still taken as the sign of the state of the people as a whole, the city in which the house of God was: to lose which was to lose the only place in which the atoning blood could be presented to God; so that for Jerusalem to be set aside was for the nation to be left to the full burden of its sins. But for what a purpose had God set them in this place of privilege—this people alone in all the earth the recipient of divine revelations? In the midst of the nations, as we have seen abundantly, it should have been theirs to maintain a testimony for

Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, verily because thou hast [o]defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also [p]withdraw* mine eye that it may not spare, neither will I have [q]pity. A third part of thee shall die of the [r]pestilence, and shall be consumed by the famine in the midst of thee, and a third part shall fall by the [s]sword round about thee, and I will [t]scatter a third part to all the winds, and draw out a sword after them, and mine anger shall be accomplished, and I will cause my wrath† to [u]rest upon them and will comfort myself, and they shall [v]know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in my jealousy when I have accomplished my wrath† upon them, and I will make thee a [w]desolation and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, before the eyes of every [x]passer by; and it shall be a [y]reproach and a [z]taunt, and a [a]warning and an [b]astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes.‡ I, Jehovah, have spoken. When I send upon them the evil [c]arrows of famine which are for destruction, which I send to destroy you, I will even increase famine upon you and break for you the staff of bread, and I will send upon you famine and evil [d]beasts, and they shall bereave thee, and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee, and I will bring the sword upon thee. I, [e]Jehovah, have spoken.

o 2 Chr. 36. 14 *cf.* Lev. 16. 16.
p *cf.* Hos. 11. 8. *cf.* Jer. 9. 7
q ch. 9. 10.
r ver. 2. Jer. 15. 2. Deut. 28. 21.
s ch. 6. 12. Lev. 26. 25.
t Lev. 26. 33. Deut. 28. 64. Zech. 2. 6. Ps. 44. 11.
u ch. 21. 17. *cf.* Is. 1. 24. *cfr.* Zeph. 3. 17.
v ch. 6. 14.
w Lev. 26. 31. Jer. 4. 7. Lam. 1. 4.
x Lam. 1. 12. *cf.* 2 Chr. 7. 20. 21.
y Ps. 79. 4.
z *cf.* Zeph. 2. 8.
a *cf.* 1 Ki. 9. 8, 9.
b *cf.* Jer. 25. 9.
c Deut. 32. 23, 24.
d Lev. 26. 22. *cf.* ch. 34. 25.
e ver. 15.

* Or, "Diminish [thee], and mine eye shall not spare."
† Literally, "Heat." ‡ Literally, "Rebukes of wrath."

God amongst those that had turned their backs upon Him—a testimony which might appeal to every heart that sought God in the lands around. But what was the result? Israel had gone beyond the very nations themselves in wickedness, refusing His judgments and rebelling against His statutes; copying the manners of those from whom, because of their condition, God had separated them, they became all the more (as would necessarily be the case, for the abuse of their privileges) aliens from God and devoted to their abominations. God therefore had to make their judgment as unique as their iniquity had been. Even here the tenderness of His love is shown in the very announcement of His judgment; and we see indeed again the "appearance as of a Man upon the throne." "*I will withdraw mine eye*," He says, "that it may not spare thee." The eye affects the heart, and it is as if He said that, if He allowed Himself but to let His eye rest upon them, He could not bear to execute the judgment. This is the Heart behind the Hand; but the Hand does not on that account really falter in the carrying out of that which righteousness now so imperatively demands. If, on the one hand, He has a pitiful eye that would spare, yet on the other there is that in His character which makes Him speak of the wrath which He causes to rest upon them as that in which He will "comfort Himself."

Yet even here there is a lesson, as we know, for every susceptible heart

SECTION 5 (Chap. vi.)

The sinful people in Jehovah's hands.

And the [f]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the [g]mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to the mountains and to the hills, to the water channels and to the [h]valleys, Behold, I, even I, am bringing upon you a sword, and I will [i]destroy your high places, and your [j]sun-pillars shall be broken, and I will cast down your [k]slain before your idols. I will even lay the [l]carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols,* and [m]scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwelling places shall the cities be [n]laid waste, and the [o]high places become desolate; that your [p]altars may be laid waste and made desolate,† and your idols may be [q]broken and cease, and your sun-pillars be [r]hewn down, and your [s]works be abolished. And

f ch. 7. 1.
g ch. 20. 46. ch. 36. 1. *h cf.* Is. 40. 4.
i Lev. 26. 30. *cf.* Is. 2. 18.
j ver. 6. Lev. 26. 30. 2 Chr. 14. 5. Is. 17. 8.
k 2 Ki. 23. 20.
l 1 Ki. 13. 2. 2 Chr 34. 5.
m *cf.* 2 Ki. 23. 15, 16. *cf.* Ps. 53. 5.
n *cf.* Is. 1. 7.
o *cf.* 2 Chr. 14. 3. *cf.* Lev. 26. 30.
p *cf.* Hos. 8. 11. *cf.* Hos 10. 8.
q *cf.* 1 Sa. 5. 4. *cf.* Is. 46. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 2. 18.
r *cf.* Is. 10. 33. *cf.* Judg. 6. 25-28.
s *cf.* Jer. 25. 6.

* Or, "abominations." † More literally, "become guilty."

amongst them, as there is a terrible lesson of holiness for the nations around. "They shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in my jealousy when I have accomplished my wrath upon them. And I will make thee a desolation and reproach among the nations that are round about thee, before the eyes of every passer by; and it shall be a reproach and a taunt and a warning and an astonishment to the nations that are round about thee." This is sealed again and again by the solemn asseveration: "I, Jehovah, have spoken."

Sec. 5.

The word of Jehovah now comes afresh to the prophet with the distinct count in the indictment against Israel. The mountains are here specifically addressed because of their connection with the people's idolatrous foreign worship which had its location there. The channels of water and the valleys, as dependent upon them, have a necessary place here also. In contrast with Egypt, the land of independence—watered by its river, whose sources were so far off that practically they could forget all about them—Israel's land was a land of mountains and valleys, drinking the water of the rain of heaven, a land essentially dependent, and its dependence manifest, but a land which, as thus cast upon God, was such as He specially chose for a people that were in like manner to be dependent upon Himself, and thus to realize His gracious and continual care. Thus it was "a land that the Lord thy God careth for," where the eyes and the heart of Jehovah were continually. It is noticeable that Shinar was, like Egypt, nourished by its rivers, and in distinct contrast with the mountains from which those who colonized it had come down. "They found," Scripture says (what exactly suited them), "a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there." Here, therefore, as so constantly in Scripture, the material thing is significant of the spiritual condition. Israel's mountains were in this way like a constant prayer to God, upon which the dews of heaven settled, and brought down the rain so continually needed. At the same time,

the [t]slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall [u]know that I am Jehovah. Yet will I [v]leave a remnant,* in that ye shall have some [w]escaped from the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered in the countries. And they that escape of you shall [z]remember me among the nations whither they have been carried captives, how that I have been broken† with their [y]lewd heart which hath departed from me, and their eyes which play the harlot after their idols,‡ and they shall [z]loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah. Not in [a]vain have I said that I would do this evil to them.

Thus saith the Lord ⁊ Jehovah: [b]Smite with thy hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas, because of all

t ver. 13. *cf.* Jer. 25. 33.
u ch. 7. 4, etc. *cf.* Ps. 9. 16.
v ch. 5. 2, etc. Rom. 9. 27.
w ch. 14. 22. *cf.* Is. 4. 2.
x *cf.* Lev. 26. 40-42. *cf.* ch. 16.61.
y ch. 44. 7. *cf.* ch. 16.15.
z ch. 20. 43. ch. 36. 31.
a *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.
b ch. 21.14,17. *cf.* Nu. 24.10. *cf.* Amos 9. 1.

* This clause is expressed by one Hebrew word.
† Others, including Hengstenberg, translate, "when I have broken."
‡ Or, "abominations." ⁊ *Adonai.*

and beautifully, these mountains were also the fortifications of the land which would derive its strength in the same way in which it preserved constantly its dependence upon and appeal to heaven. This distinguished and separated them from the nations around which had got far enough away from God to identify Him with the mere creatures of His hand.

Thus Israel's land was to be a protest against the heathenism which everywhere else prevailed, and in this way suited to be the depository of a continually growing revelation, the blessing of which is ours to-day. But, alas, what had Israel done? They had made these very mountains to be but heathen altars with which to insult their gracious Protector, the Source of all their blessing. Upon the tops of those mountains, the idolatrous altars that were so conspicuous there were now the sad witnesses of their own departure from Jehovah, their covenant God, who had signified Himself such in the very name which they thus insulted. They must, therefore, by judgment be made to recognize Him as the Jehovah that He was. And thus, as if the people themselves were unworthy to be addressed, the word by the prophet comes to the mountains, to the hills, to the water channels and to the valleys: "Behold, I, even I, am bringing upon you a sword. And I will destroy your high places, and your altars shall be desolate, and your sun-pillars shall be broken, and I will cast down your slain before your altars. I will even lay the carcases of the children of Israel before their idols, and scatter your bones round about your altars." Thus were they to prove now by experience, as bitter as God would have made it sweet to them, that He was Jehovah indeed.

Yet a remnant is to be left, to be His witness on the one hand of the grace in which He would for His own sake at last fulfil His promises; "a remnant," as the apostle says, "according to the election of grace;" on the other hand a remnant that must witness in sorrow and brokenness of spirit the judgment which had come in because of the abominations practised, and from which grace alone could exempt any. "Yet will I leave a remnant," He says, "in that ye

the evil abominations of the house of Israel, for they shall [c]fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence. He that is [d]far off shall die of the pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that is [e]left and is preserved * shall die by the famine; and I will accomplish my wrath upon them. And ye shall [f]know that I am Jehovah, when their slain shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon [g]every high hill, upon all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick terebinth, the places where they offered sweet savor to all their idols.† And I will [h]stretch out my hand upon them and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the [i]wilderness of Diblath, in all their dwelling places. And they shall [j]know that I am Jehovah.

[c] ch. 5. 12. *cf.* Jer. 15. 2. *cf.* Jer. 21. 9.
[d] *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 24. *cf.* Am. 5. 19.
[e] *cf.* ch. 5. 2-4.
[f] ch. 5. 13. ver. 7.
[g] *cf.* Jer. 2 20. *cf.* Is. 57. 5, 7. *cf.* Hos. 4. 13.
[h] Is. 5. 25. Is. 9. 12.
[i] *cf.* Jer. 48. 21, 22.
[j] ver. 7. ch. 20. 38.

* Or, "besieged." † Or, "abominations."

shall have some escaped from the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. And they of you that escape shall remember Me among the nations whither they have been carried captives; how that I have been broken with their lewd hearts which have departed from Me, and their eyes which play the harlot after their idols." But here the judgment should have its desired effect: "And they shall loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah." Alas for the people, to whom God had revealed Himself after so abundant a manner, who now needed to be called back to the recognition of the blessed Person Himself who had delivered and blessed them!

But, for the mass, no judgment could avail: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Smite with thy hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas, because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence." Nothing but a complete emptying of the land as to the living could now suffice—leaving it a mere sepulchre of their multitudinous dead, reeking with the unburied corpses which would make it desolate, "more desolate than the wilderness towards Diblath." This last word, though there is question about it, probably means "fertility." Such indeed should have been the condition in every way of Jehovah's land, which was now to be so utter a desolation. In all their dwelling-places, as scattered amongst the nations, they were at last to know, without any peradventure, that their God was Jehovah.

Sec. 6.

The final word is now addressed through the prophet to the land of Israel, the very soil itself, to which the end is come, in all the four corners of it. Thus, clearly, there is no hope of anything more. There is no soil to produce fruit. The limit of forbearance is reached, and there is no limit to the wrath, save only that there are those in whom grace manifests its power still, as there always will be. Otherwise the end was upon the whole land, an end in God's anger, the condition of things in it being the manifest proof of all the abominations of its inhabitants. The earth at large, as we well know, suffers every-

SECTION 6 (Chap. vii).

The limit of forbearance reached.

And the [k]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord* Jehovah unto the land† of Israel: An [l]end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land.† Now is the end upon thee; and I will send mine [m]anger upon thee, and will judge thee [n]according to thy ways, and will bring upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall [o]not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will bring thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall [p]know that I am Jehovah.

k *cf.* ch. 1. 3. ch. 6. 1.
l vers. 5, 6. *cf.* Am. 8. 2. *cf.* Mt. 24.14.
m *cf.* Ps. 21.9
n *cf.* Ps. 28. 4 *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10.
o ch. 5. 11. ch. 8. 18. ch. 9. 5, 10.
p ch. 12. 20, etc.

* *Adonai.* † Two different words.

where because of the sin of man, both by the desolations which sin itself naturally produces, and by the judgments which are upon it from God. Thus the places of highest privilege may become necessarily the places of most marked desolation. God's own pitiful eye can spare no more. "I will bring thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee:" that is, there is no deliverance, no ability to roll off the burden. The unchangeableness of Jehovah Himself certifies and assures the continuation of the punishment.

Thus He declares that that which has come is evil, and only evil. It is unmixed calamity. The "turn"—that is, the revolution of the wheel—is come to the dweller in the land. Much difficulty has been made of an expression which is very simple in view of what forms so large a part of Ezekiel's vision—those wheels that are so high as to be terrible, that do a terrible though needful work in the abasement of man, and even in view of final restoration. The privileged people of God thus become subject to the mutability which is the law of all things merely human. They could claim no exemption; and even the higher they had been lifted, the more terrible would be the fall. The time had come for this—not the day which in false hope they had been prophesying for themselves, but of consternation and confusion; the battle lost, not won; no joyful tidings of victory to announce from the mountain-tops, as there will be even yet in the future for them (Isa. xl. 9); for the wrath of God was now to be poured out wholly, and His anger consummated, although it would be no more than just the fruit of their ways, the equal demonstration of divine righteousness in their case; taken, as they were, with the evidences of their guilt in their midst, in all the idolatry which polluted them and which we shall soon have exhibited in full detail.

It is a solemn thing to realize that God permits full consummation of human iniquity before the judgment falls. As it was in Israel, so it will be in Christendom. God does not come in to judge in a day of reformation, even partial as this may be. If He sees even an Ahab putting on sackcloth and walking softly before Him. He refrains from judgment (1 Kings xxi. 27-29). With Ahab it was mere fear, of course—nothing that God could really accept; and yet it was enough to avert, for the moment, the imminent wrath; and thus the abominations that are everywhere under the surface in Christendom must be allowed to come out openly before the full judgment comes.

Thus saith the Lord* Jehovah; An [q]evil, an only evil! behold, it is come. The end is come, the end is come; it awaketh against thee; behold, it cometh, it cometh. The turn† of the [r]wheel is come to thee, O dweller in the land; the time is come, the day is near—a tumult, and [s]not a joyful shout upon the mountains. Now will I soon pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger against thee; and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and I will bring upon thee all thine abominations. And mine [t]eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will render to thee according to thy ways, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that it is I, Jehovah, that smite.

Behold, the [u]day; behold, it is come! The turn of the wheel is come forth; the [v]rod hath blossomed; [w]pride is full blown. [x]Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness; there [shall remain] [y]none of them, nor of their multitude, nor of their wealth, nor shall there be [z]wailing for them. The time is come, the day [a]draweth near: let not the [b]buyer rejoice nor the seller mourn; for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. For the seller shall [c]not return to that which is sold, though he‡ were yet among the living: for the

q *cf.* Jer. 1. 14. *cf.* Amos 3. 6. with Is. 45. 7.
r ver. 10. *cf.* Ps. 83. 13. *cf.* ch. 10. 13. *cf.* Dan. 7. 10.
s *cf.* Is. 2. 12–17. *ctr.* Is. 44. 23. *ctr.* Is. 52. 7. *ctr.* Nah. 1. 15.
t ver. 4. *ctr.* Mal. 3. 17.
u Is. 13. 6. Zeph. 1. 7. Mal. 4. 5. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 2, 3.
v *cf.* Jer. 1. 11, 12. *cf.* Mt. 24. 32, 33.
w *cf.* Ps. 59. 12. *cf.* Prov. 16. 18. *cf.* Dan. 4. 30, 31, 37.
x Jer. 6. 7. Jer. 20. 8. *cf.* Ps. 55. 9–11.
y *cf.* Is. 39. 6. Jer. 50. 26.
z *cf.* Jer. 16. 5, 6. *ctr.* Lk. 19. 41.
a *cf.* Jas. 5. 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29–31.
c *cf.* Lk. 21. 21.

* *Adonai.*

† The word is of doubtful meaning. In Isaiah 28: 5, it is rendered "crown." The primary meaning is given as "ring." Hengstenberg renders it "lot." The text is perhaps the best rendering.

‡ More literally, "though their life were yet," etc.

The Church must be removed, and the indwelling Spirit of God that hinders the full development of things according to their nature. The restraint removed, there will be manifested, in the man of sin, the iniquity which has been working in mystery through the ages past. This has to be brought out of its concealment, and the delusion which man seeks must be permitted to him. Then, as the issue, there will be that open defiance of God in every way in which He has revealed Himself, which will necessitate the full display of long-lingering judgment. He who is to come will come, and "will smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips destroy the wicked one" (Isa. xi. 4).

But the time of wrath upon Christendom can only come after there has been the full revelation of God, and time given for the effect of it to be fully manifest. Almost 2,000 years have passed since the revelation has been completed, and now he that will may see that the end is at hand.

The judgment upon Israel here is only a partial anticipation of the wrath in that day. Nevertheless, the rooting of Israel out of their land, and the desolation of the house which God had among men, marked a distinct crisis, the day of which had come. The turn of the wheel, as Ezekiel repeats, had come to them. The rod for the punishment of their iniquity was blossoming, even as the pride which provoked the judgment was indeed full blown. Violence among them had thus risen up into a rod to smite them: in itself a rod of wickedness, no doubt; for not

vision is touching the whole multitude thereof; it shall not be revoked; and none* shall through his [d]iniquity assure his life. They have blown the [e]trumpet and made all ready, but none goeth to the battle; for my [f]wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. The [g]sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine [h]within: he that is in the field shall [i]die by the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him. And they that [j]escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them [k]mourning, every one for his iniquity. All [l]hands shall be feeble,† and all knees shall dissolve‡ into water. And they shall gird on [m]sackcloth, and [n]horror‖ shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and [o]baldness upon all their heads. They shall cast their [p]silver in the streets, and their gold shall be as an unclean thing; their silver and their gold shall [q]not be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's wrath; they shall not [r]satisfy their souls, nor fill their belly: for it hath been the [s]stumbling-block of their iniquity.

* Literally, "A man shall not," etc.
† Or, "hang down." ‡ Literally, "go." ‖ Or, "trembling."

4; Zeph. 1. 18; *cf.* Ps. 115. 4–8. *r cf.* Is. 9. 20; *ctr.* Ps. 103. 5. *s cf.* ch. 14. 3, 4;

d cf. Jer. 17. 11. *cf.* Ps. 55. 23. *cf.* Prov. 10. 2 with Prov. 11. 4. *e cf.* 2 Ki. 9. 13. *cf.* 1 Ki. 1. 5, 41-49. *f* ver. 8. *g* Deut. 32. 25. Lam. 1. 20. *h cf.* 2 Ki. 7. 4. Lam. 1. 20. *i cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 24. *j* ch. 6. 8. *cf.* Ps. 11. 1. *k* Is. 59. 11. Lam. 2. 10. *l cf.* Heb. 12. 12. ch. 21. 7. Is. 13. 7. *m cf.* 2 Ki. 19. 1. Is. 22. 12. Joel 1. 13. *n cf.* Is. 51. 17. *cf.* Jer. 3. 24, 25. *o* Is. 3. 24. Amos 8. 10. *p cf.* Is. 2. 20, 21. *q cf.* Prov. 11. *cf.* Rev. 2. 14.

on account of righteousness in the enemy did God permit their triumph over His people; yet comparatively even these were clean. They had not trampled God's gifts under their feet as Israel had done. And thus they had themselves invited the scourge which was now to sweep through the land, leaving nothing remaining, neither of their multitude, nor of their wealth, nor even any to wail for the absence of these. The time was already come, the day was at hand; the buyer need no more rejoice in that which he had acquired, nor the seller either mourn for that which he had lost: for the wrath upon all was without distinction. No day of jubilee would return with its gracious provision to him who had had to give up his patrimony through poverty; and if even his life were yet permitted to him there would be no land for him to return to. "The vision," says the Lord, "is touching the whole multitude thereof. It shall not be revoked, and none shall through his iniquity assure his life." Strange indeed that man under the very judgment of God could think to secure himself by means of the very iniquity which was bringing down the judgment; yet man is capable of just such thoughts.

The prophet sees only utter desolation. Were the trumpet blown, there was none to go to battle. Sword, pestilence and famine had already done their work, and if there were but a few that escaped, they would be like scared and scattered doves of the valleys driven to the mountains—all of them with their mournful plaint, and every one for his own iniquity. Horror would cover them, shame be upon their faces, and baldness upon their heads. The very silver and gold, so precious to man, would be cast away in bitterness as worthless, utterly unable to accomplish anything for them; neither to satisfy their souls, nor fill their belly; for indeed it was the very stumbling-block of their iniquity. God had enriched them with that which was much more than the

And he set in majesty his beautiful [t]ornament,* but they made therein the [u]images of their abominations and of their detestable things: therefore have I made it unto them an [v]unclean thing. And I will [w]give it into the hands of [w]strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall profane it. And I will [x]turn my face from them, and they shall [y]profane my secret [place];† even the violent shall enter into it and profane it.

Make the chain; for the land is full of [z]bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence. Therefore‡ I will bring the worst of the nations, and they shall possess their houses; and I will make the [a]pride of the strong to cease; and their sanctuaries shall be profaned.§ Destruction cometh; and they shall [b]seek peace, but there shall be none. [c]Mischief‖ shall come upon mischief, and rumor¶ shall come upon rumor; and they shall [d]seek a vision from the prophet; but the law shall [e]perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. The [f]king shall mourn, and the prince shall put on blank amazement, and the [g]hands of the people of the land shall tremble: I will do unto them [h]according to their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall [i]know that I am Jehovah.

t *cf.* Jer. 4. 30. *cf.* ch. 16. 17.
u *cf.* Judg. 8. 24-27.
v *cf.* ch. 36. 17.
w Is. 1. 7.
x *cf.* Jer. 18. 17. *cf.* Ps. 34. 16. *ctr.* Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19.
y Ps. 79. 1.
z *cf.* Is. 1. 15. *cf.* Num. 35. 33.
a *cf.* Is. 23. 9. *cf.* Is. 40. 6-8 with 1 Pet. 1. 24, 25.
b *cf.* Prov. 1. 28. *cf.* Zech. 7. 13. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 6. 2.
c *cf.* Job 1. 14-19. Jer. 4. 20. *ctr.* Jno. 1. 16
d *cf.* Amos 8. 11. Lam. 2. 9. *cf.* ch. 20. 3.
e *ctr.* Jer. 18. 18.
f *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 30.
g ver. 17.
h Gal. 6. 7. Hos. 12. 2.
i ver. 4, etc.

* Hengstenberg renders this, "And his glorious ornament he has set for pride." † Or, "treasure." ‡ "And."
§ More literally, as Hengstenberg, "They who consecrate them shall be defiled." ‖ Or, "injury." ¶ Or, "message."

riches so much valued by man: He had set the beautiful ornament of His own house in their midst, and they had put therein the images of their abominations; so that God had Himself to treat His holy house as an unclean thing, and give it up to the hands of strangers to be a spoil for the wicked of the earth.

Thus the prophet is bidden now to "make the chain" which indeed they had forged for themselves, as the crimes that filled their land attested. No sanctuary could be maintained in the midst of a people such as they were, and the glory of God required the removal of that which now only dishonored Him by its existence. Thus all, in fact, was gone. The prophet who was alone their hope, in days when every other link was broken, would have a vision from God no more, as the law would perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. From prince to people they would alike now receive their judgment; and thus they would know (how terrible to know it thus, and how constant the repetition of this!) that their God was Jehovah.

Subdivision 2.

There yet remains to be given proof of the general charge which has been made as to the condition of the people, and this in view of all the privileges, all the mercies shown, and all the warnings given. Here it is Jerusalem, and those connected with it, that are especially before us, as those most conspicuous

1 (viii.): The just cause of judgment.

SUBDIVISION 2 (Chap. viii.–xix.).

Conviction of the sin for which the glory leaves the city.

SECTION 1 (Chaps. viii.–xi.).

The shepherd's rod becomes a rod of iron.

1 (1-6): The first cause, the image of jealousy. Rebellion against God as the one living and almighty Maker.

1. [1] AND it came to pass in the [j]sixth year, in the sixth [month], on the fifth of the month, that I sat in my house, and the [k]elders of Judah sat before me, [and] the [l]hand of the Lord* Jehovah fell there upon me.

j *cf.* ch. 1. 2. *cf.* ch. 20. 1.
k ch. 14. 1. ch. 20. 1. ch. 33. 31. *cf.* Lk. 5. 17.
l ch. 1. 3. ch. 3. 22.

* *Adonai.*

for the pride of heart which hardened itself against all warning. Proportionately to the mercy that had so far spared, so must their punishment be.

Sec. 1.

Jehovah had been their Shepherd, as witnessed by the pillar of cloud and glory, of which Ezekiel speaks so much, which had guided and protected them. But it is this that has now become their adversary. Their Shepherd's rod becomes thus to themselves—not to their enemies merely—a rod of iron; and God calls in the witness of man himself to the necessity of this. God calls to witness earth as well as heaven, in the judgment of His people; after which the glory finally leaves the city.

1. There are four examples given, all witnesses to their complete adoption of the idolatry around them. Question has been raised as to how far that which Ezekiel sees in vision answered to the facts. For instance, as to the actual defilement of the temple in the way that Ezekiel sees it, it being supposed by some that it is God Himself who connects their abominations with that holy house of His, which stamped its character upon the land. Yet, while it is true that all here is expressly stated to be in vision, it is clear that there must be in it, none the less, a true picture of the people's state. It is the evidence upon which they are convicted; it must not be merely ideal, therefore, but the positive facts of the case—facts that could be appealed to as without possibility of question.

[1] The new division is marked, as we might expect, by a new date, although reckoned from the same significant period as before—that of Jehoiachin's captivity. We have come now to the sixth year of this; and the sixth month of the sixth year emphasizes the thought of evil come to its head, but at the same time with God's hand over it; while the fifth day, the day of the vision, links responsibility with judgment. On this day the prophet is in his own house, the place of family relationships, which could not be exempt from the invasion of that which, as judgment, brooded over the whole people; the shadow falling even where grace had wrought exemption from the actual judgment.

The presence of the elders of Judah prevents that which follows from being simply a private, personal communication. Nothing is said of the purpose for which they were there; it is therefore a matter of entire indifference. We need no speculations to explain what is manifestly unexplained. The elders are rulers of Judah, as is manifest—those who should have maintained judgment according to God, but who now were made the witness of judgment which was coming from God in place of that which they had failed to exercise. In

Then I beheld and, lo, a [m]likeness as the appearance of fire, from the appearance of his [n]loins and downward, [o]fire; and from his loins and upward, as the appearance of [p]brightness, as the look of [q]gold [and] brass. And he put forth the [r]form of a hand, and took me by a [s]lock of my head; and the [t]Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heavens, and brought me in the [u]visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance

m ch. 1. 26.
n ch. 1. 27.
o *cf.* Heb. 12. 29.
p *cf.* Lk. 9. 29.
q ch. 1. 4. *cf.* Rev. 1. 15.
r *cf.* Dan. 5. 5.
s *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 2.
t ch. 3. 12, 14.
u ch. 11. 1, 24. ch. 40. 2. *cf.* Rev. 20. 10.

their presence, then, the hand of the Lord Jehovah fell once more upon the prophet.

He beholds, and, first of all, there appears to him, as he has seen before, the likeness of a Man upon the throne of God. Again there is seen, "as the appearance of fire"—the holiness of God, which against unrepentant wickedness is wrath, and which takes this character especially "from the loins and downward:" that is, in that which speaks of the *activities* of the person seen, rather than of the personality itself. "From the loins upward" there is the appearance of brightness, as the look of gold and brass. Thus we are ever reminded that, whatever the work may be, the character of Him who is engaged in it cannot fail to be displayed; and there is for us the joy of this, the appearance of a brightness, which is in fact that of the divine glory itself, the glory of One who is in His own nature immutable, of which the brass speaks.

There is at first no vision of anything beside, not even of the throne upon which He sits, no living creatures, no wheels. We shall come to these directly, but we have to notice that here, first of all, we have the Lord Himself. It is He who puts forth the form of a hand, and taking the prophet by a lock of his head, the Spirit lifts him up between earth and heaven, and brings him in the visions of God to Jerusalem. Thus it is plain that all that follows here is a vision simply. It is a vision according to the truth, necessarily, because it is a vision of God; nevertheless, we have to remember that God looks forward as well as back, and that the judgments which are seen now to take place may be, in fact, as in the slaughter of those in the temple-courts and in the city, that which takes place afterwards, and not necessarily at the moment in which they are seen.

In Jerusalem, as the prophet is carried there, nothing is seen but its great dominant feature, the house of God which is in it. Here is the heart of the whole subject before us—the heart of God Himself; of Him who assumes for the prophet the "form of a Man," and of whom it could be said from of old that His "delights were with the sons of men." The temple is the symbol of this, for which David's heart longed after as the abode of God among men; of which He, of whom David was but the mere shadow, "sware unto Jehovah and vowed unto the mighty One of Jacob, Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up to my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for Jehovah, a tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob" (Ps. 132: 2–5). And where did David himself find this? "Lo," he says, "we heard of it in Ephratah; we found it in the fields of the wood." Thus had man treated in those days the token of the Lord's presence with them; what had characterized the preceding time was that the ark "had not been inquired of in the days of Saul" (1 Chr. xiii. 3).

of the [v]inner gate that looketh toward the [w]north, where was the seat of the [z]image of jealousy, which [y]provoketh to jealousy. And, behold, the [z]glory of the God of Israel was there, [a]according to the appearance that I saw in the plain. And he said unto me, Son of man, [b]lift up now thine eyes the way towards the north. And I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north and, behold, northward of the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. And he said

[v] *cf.* ver. 14. *cf.* Neh. 13. 5.
[w] *ctr.* Ps. 48. 2.
[x] Jer. 7. 30. *cf.* Ex. 20. 5. *ctr.* Col. 1. 15 with Mt. 3. 17.
[y] Deut. 32. 16-21.
[z] *cf.* Ex. 33. 18. *cf.* Jno. 1. 14.
a ch. 1. 28; ch. 3. 23. *b* vers. 6, 13, 15.

Thus has man met again and again the wondrous grace that would draw man to God Himself; and here now, the place of such a testimony, is the very place of fullest abomination! Brought to the entrance of the inner gate that looked toward the north, there the prophet is confronted at the outset with the proof of this. It is the seat of the image of jealousy, "which provoketh to jealousy." And now, in full view of this, the glory of the God of Israel appears according to the appearance that the prophet had seen in the valley: "And he said unto me, Son of man, lift up now thine eyes towards the north." From the north, the place of darkness, from where the sun is absent, comes ever the opposition to God: "And I lifted up mine eyes toward the north, and behold, northward of the gate of the altar, this image of jealousy in the entry."

The image of jealousy presents, first, the general thought which underlies all that follows here. God will not give His glory to another. Hence any self-devised image of Him, which must of necessity be man's imagination, must be a challenge of the One only to be known by revelation, otherwise unsearchable. It is impossible indeed for man's thoughts to get beyond himself. Thus the image of God which he devises must be only in some way a reflection of himself; but this is the debasement of God to man's own likeness. The question is asked in Job as an unanswerable one: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" Whatever the witness of creation therefore (true witness as it is), God never really left man to that. He declared Himself, as Scripture assures us, at the beginning; and it was man who voluntarily got away from this, banished himself into the darkness and distortion of his own thoughts.

And still this image of jealousy is that which threatens us all. It stands, as it were, at the very entrance when we would approach God Himself. And it need not be a visible or open image to do this. What admonition there is for us in this endeavor, as it really is, to have a god after our own thoughts, which is always in opposition to the true God? Thus "covetousness," the apostle tells us, "is idolatry;" and this, as we know, may be amongst those who are in all other respects most orthodox. But the heart after its own object, seeking that which gratifies itself (although it never *satisfies*), will have a god according to its own thought; while in *name* He may abide just what He was, and all the points of orthodoxy be preserved.

Here, in Israel, their hearts had got away so manifestly from God that the image of jealousy stood in open sight at the very gate by which men approached God; appealing thus to all, and blocking the way of sacrifice (the way of the altar) which, while it is God's only way, is just on that account what man's heart naturally would put aside. The image was in the outer court, presenting itself thus to the multitude. It was indeed the common sin and snare.

unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do, the great [c]abominations that the house of Israel commit here to [d]cause me to go far off from my sanctuary? But thou shalt see [e]yet other great abominations

2 (7-12): The second cause: The chambers of imagery, and the degradation of beast-worship.

2 And he brought me to the entrance of the [f]court; and I looked, and behold, a [g]hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, [h]dig now in the wall; and when I had digged in the wall, behold, a [i]door. And he said unto me, Go in and see the wicked [j]abominations that they do here. And I went in and looked, and, behold, every form of [k]creeping thing and abominable beast, even all the [l]idols of the house of Israel, [m]portrayed * upon the wall round about. And there

c *cf.* Deut. 7. 25, 26.
d *cf.* 1 Sam. 1. 21, 22.
e vers. 13, 15.
f *cf.* vers. 3, 14. 16. *ctr.* Ps. 93 5.
g *cf.* Ps. 139. 12. *cf.* Heb. 4. 13. *cf.* Prov. 15. 3.
h *cf.* Deut. 13. 14.
i *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 11. *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 1.
j ch. 7. 3, etc.
k *cf.* Deut. 4. 16–18.

* Or, "engraved."

cf. Rom. 1. 23. *l cf.* Ps. 115. 4-7. *m ctr.* 2 Chr. 3. 5-7; *ctr.* Ps. 29. 9.

And we need not speculate, as has been done, as to the form of the image, what false deity was represented by it. The less we define in this respect, if we could define, as we really cannot, the more significant will be what is before us. Any *special* false god the multitude might disclaim; for man's thoughts are various, and their gods therefore multitudinous as their thoughts; but the trouble is with the thinking at all. God has revealed Himself. Blessed to know we have only to receive His revelation.

How careful we should be, therefore, that we add nothing to it, that there be no mere speculation even within the limits, as we may say, of revelation itself. God's own Word is best; is all-sufficient. If we add to its perfection, we in reality subtract from it. We are right in inquiring into it, in seeking to know the depths that are there; and if we do so we shall find that indeed God has spoken to us in it, "not in the *words* which man's wisdom teacheth" even, "but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Were we to say that the image here was the image of Baal or the image of Ashtaroth or any other specific form, the meaning for us at least would have largely died out of it. We would refer it to the past, to Israel, the rebellious nation, and we should escape entirely the warning which speaks to us to-day, as much as ever, of an image that provoketh to jealousy—the imagination of man, whatever form it may assume. But how blessed to know that we have indeed "the image of the invisible God," One in whom God has spoken to us, and met all true cravings of the heart after Him, the One in whom we find "the Word made flesh, the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, and who hath declared Him."

2 What follows, therefore, is but a further development of this fundamental thought; it shows whither it would carry those who commit themselves to it. The second proof of Israel's condition is their open adoption, if we may call it open—for after all, the secrecy and darkness accompanying it betray the consciousness of the moral deformity attaching to it—their open adoption of beast-worship.

We shall find much suggestiveness here in the symbolism of the numerals. We are at the second step downwards, and the number indicates descent; but in its ideal form it is for service, as with the Lord Jesus. It is His number, as we have abundantly seen. But the heathen gods themselves came down to men. They had an interest in reference to the things of earth, but how essentially different! The descent of the heathen gods was almost always their real

stood before them seventy men of the [n]elders of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood [o]Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his [p]censer in his hand; and the prayer of the cloud of incense went up. And he said unto me, Hast thou seen, son of man, what the elders of the house of Israel do in the [q]dark, every one in his [r]chambers of imagery? * For they say, Jehovah [s]seeth us not, Jehovah hath [t]forsaken the land.

* Or, "imagination."

n ch. 14. 1. *ctr.* Tit. 2. 2.
o *cf.* ch. 11. 1. *cf.* 2 Ki. 25. 23.
p *cf.* Lev. 10 1. *cf.* Num. 16. 17, 35.
q *cf.* Eph. 5. 11 13.
r *ctr.* Jer. 35. 2-4. *cf.* chap. 14 3.
s ch. 9. 9. *ctr.* Gen. 16 13. *cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 26.
t *ctr.* Is. 54. 5-8.

degradation, in which even bestial forms were assumed by them for base and lustful ends. There is no need to enter into this for those who have the slightest knowledge of the ancient idolatry which the Egyptian animal-worship made permanent, the worship of the animal forms themselves, which (whatever may be pleaded for its esoteric meaning) would necessarily be accompanied with the most debasing results, such as the epistle to the Romans witnesses. For a beast, no immorality is possible, and therefore where beasts are gods it may well drop out of common speech. Apart from the spirit which God has given him (which often, alas, is almost as if it were not) man is, in fact, *but* a beast; and thus he can find in the beast that which reflects and appeals to his lower nature; but *become* a beast, he cannot. He must carry with him into these bestial instincts the evidence of a higher nature, which in subjection to the lower must of necessity degrade itself. But let us not relegate what is here merely to the past, as something of old time which has been civilized out of existence, and which we may well forget, therefore, except as the evidence of the progress we have made since times like these. For Scripture at least the "natural" man is still the "psychical" man, the *soul*-led man; and his wisdom, which cometh not from above, is "earthly, sensual" (psychical, that is). And more, it is "devilish;" for, through all human departures, easily traceable is the subtlety and power of one who, with no beast nature in himself, yet has led man in this departure.

These things then characterized Israel in the awful days that we are contemplating. The people who had in their hands God's revelation, the people separated from the nations around by multiplied interventions on God's part and wondrous works of power by which He made Himself known, are a people now so completely gone from Him that it is precisely in this worship of the beast, in secrecy and darkness, that we find the seventy elders, and Jaazaniah, a son of Shaphan, in their midst. What was the condition of the nation whose elders were the leaders and instigators in such things as these! And the names here mark the rapid and complete departure that had been going on. Jaazaniah means "Jehovah hears," and this name came to him from a father whose own name signifies "one who is hidden"—the name of the hyrax or coney of our common version. The book of Proverbs speaks of it as one of the things "little upon the earth, but exceeding wise" "They are a feeble folk," says the wise man, "yet make they their houses in the rocks" (Prov. xxx. 26). This is their wisdom: they know their weakness and hide themselves in their stronghold. And the record that we have of Shaphan in the history (2 Kings xxii. 8-10) answers at least to this, connecting him as it does with the publication

8 (13, 14): The third cause: Tammuz: resurrection without sanctification.

8 And he said unto me, Thou shalt again see yet [u] other great abominations which they do. And he brought me to the entry of the [v] gate of Jehovah's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat [w] women weeping for Tammuz.

[u] ver. 15. *cf.* Amos 2. 4.
[v] ver. 5. [w] *cf.* Is. 3. 16 26. *cf.* Jer. 44. 15 19.
ctr. Ex. 38. 8; *ctr.* Lk. 8. 2, 3.

of the newly discovered book of the law which Hilkiah, the priest, gives first to Shaphan. How rapid then had been the movement towards apostasy! The father in the light, cleaving to God and His Word; the son in the midnight darkness, degrading himself into a worshiper of the beasts that perish! Such then was the condition of things in Israel.

8 But we have still further proofs. The next account involves another class from that of the elders, and shows how all parts of the nation were infected now: "He brought me to the entry of the gate of Jehovah's house toward the north, and behold, there sat *women* weeping for Tammuz." Tammuz* is a word of difficult derivation, but the history of which is in measure plain. We have to identify him, no doubt, with one better known to us and to history in general as Adonis, who according to the legend, which is told in different ways, was beloved of Venus for his beauty. Slain in hunting by a boar, says the legend, he was, at her solicitation, permitted to return six months in the year from the under-world to her companionship. We need not go into it, as the general lesson is all that interests us. It is a nature picture in some way, no doubt; and faithfully represents the brief and lawless joys of earth under a heaven pictured as no less lawless, joys which soon end in lamentation; along with this long ng for their recovery, which in one way or another makes men prophesy this for themselves, but with little comfort even in that which they prophesy: as to which there need be no wonder, no knowledge of sin being in it, and no repentance.

We find God setting before us here the one side only, the sorrow and not the joy; the weak and passionate wail over the shadow departing, which identifies itself, as the details of this Tammuz-worship show, with only the increase of the power of evil in the despair of good. Thus this weeping of the women was accompanied with utter self-abandonment to the grossest wickedness. It was the practical fulfilment of the motto of despair: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Yet after all this is not absolute. Man will cling to the poorest and vainest hopes; and in the case before us here we have the distorted, faint image of what is indeed God's remedy for the sorrow of earth—not escape from death, but resurrection out of it. But this is indeed out of the power of man to accomplish; and has come to us—alone *could* come to us—in Him who has put His seal upon man's sentence, Himself bearing it.

Thus the evil which has wrecked the world is judged, and we reach God's side of it; finding not the mere restoration of the life wrecked, but, thank God, a new life in sanctification, and indeed with higher hopes than ever before.

* The derivation of "Tammuz" which is most accepted would make it a corruption of *tammezuz*, "melting away," and which they refer to the discoloration of the streams of Lebanon, among which is the river Adonis, by the mountain floods. This they connect with Adonis' legendary death by the boar, but it seems nevertheless hardly possibly to justify the derivation. On the other hand, may it not be derived more simply as *tam'uz* from *tamam*, "to complete" (and thus "finish," "end"), and *uz*, "strength," thus giving the meaning of the exhaustion of strength? This seems, more directly than the other, to apply itself to the story of Adonis.

4 (15-18): The sun-worship. Priestly apostasy.

4 And he said unto me, Seest thou, son of man? Thou shalt see yet again [x]greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the [y]inner court of Jehovah's house, and, behold, at the entry of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men with their [z]backs toward the temple of Jehovah, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the [a]sun toward the east. And he said unto me, Seest thou, son of man? Is it a light

[x] ver. 13. *cf.* ch. 16. 51.
[y] *ctr.* Joel 2. 17.
[z] Jer. 2. 27. Jer. 32 33. *ctr.* Jer. 50. 4, 5.
[a] *cf.* Deut. 4. 19. etc. *cf.* Job 31. 26-28. *cf.* Ps. 48. 3 *cf.* Isa. 40. 26.

God is the God of resurrection, and this we have seen to be stamped upon the whole physical frame of things here, and to be especially that which is before Ezekiel, the revolution of the wheel: which indeed is so high as to be dreadful, out of man's merely natural ken, yet which, as revealed, becomes with all its blessedness a possession of faith, open to all who will accept the lesson of abasement. This is the only hope, the acknowledgment of a ruin which is at once the condemnation of evil and the glorification of God. The numerical symbolism here sheds full light upon what is before us, the divine substitute for the poor hopes to which man vainly clings, and which are pictured in this Tammuz worship among God's people of old.

4 The last picture here is that of priestly apostasy; in this way it is the natural conclusion of the whole. Approach to God is what His house speaks of. The apostasy of the priesthood leaves this approach no longer possible; and this is complete in what is before us. "And he said unto me, Seest thou, son of man? Thou shalt see yet again greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of Jehovah's house, and behold, at the entry of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men with their backs toward the temple of Jehovah, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun towards the east."

These twenty-five men are necessarily a priestly company. They are representatives of the twenty-four courses into which we know the priesthood were divided, with the high-priest at the head of them. They are not indeed spoken of as priests, and at this we need not at all wonder, for the plain reason that they are apostate; but their position is between the porch and the altar, therefore in the priestly court, where no others were allowed. "And He said unto me, Seest thou, son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they yet fill the land with violence, and keep again provoking Me to anger; and behold, they put the vine-branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in wrath. Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet I will not hear them." Thus the very ones, chosen out of the chosen nation itself, to draw near to God, are seen with their backs turned upon His house, and worshiping the sun, the foremost feature in those heavens which "declare God's glory and show His handiwork," as the Psalmist reminds us (Ps. xix).

The sun, with all his brilliancy and blessing for us, is manifestly but the servant of a power beyond his own, and indeed, as Moses declares in his appeal against this very worship, servant to the peoples to whom God has assigned the ordinance of heaven (Deut. iv. 19). Thus in the very constancy with which it observes its appointed seasons, its character is seen as abiding under physical law, that of a servant simply. It is part of the great wheel of nature which

thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they yet fill the land with [b]violence, and keep again [c]provoking me to anger? And, behold, they put the [d]branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in wrath: mine eye shall not [e]spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet I will [f]not hear them.

2 (ix): The judgment a discriminative one.

2. And he cried in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, [g]Draw near, ye that have charge over the city,* and every man with his destroying [h]weapon in his hand.

* Lit., "Governments of the city."

[b] ch. 9. 9. *cf.* Gen. 6. 11.
[c] *cf.* Deut. 31. 20.
[d] *cf.* ch. 15. 2. *cf.* Rom. 1. 25.
[e] ch. 5. 11. ch. 7. 4, 9. ch. 9. 5, 10.
[f] *cf.* Prov. 1. 28. *cf.* Is. 1. 15. *cf.* Zech. 7. 13. *cf.* Lk. 13. 24-27.
[g] *cf.* Rev. 6. 1.
[h] *cf.* Ex. 32. 27.

Ezekiel has shown us, whose revolutions, indeed, its own revolution marks. But law is the rule of the governed, and not of the Governor. We must penetrate to the Heart that is beyond all this, to One who is not limited by the laws which He has appointed, to get above the necessary perplexity of those who see only, as the preacher saw, what is "under the sun." Law is indeed most necessary to produce a stable world. Where would we be if we could not trust the stability of the things amongst which we move? But those who worship it, as alas so many seem inclined to do now, instead of worshiping are merely putting the vine-branch to their nose. There is a sweetness in nature, apart from that which sin has brought into it, which we cannot and need not deny; and for one whose heart enshrines the true Beloved, "the vines with their tender grapes give a good smell" still (Song ii. 13). But if we rise no higher, this sweetness of nature only hinders the sweet savor of sacrifice—of that which is true worship and of Him who has offered it, the basis upon which everything rests now for faith. The fall being ignored, no sacrifice is needed, as is plain. Nature itself bears witness of this, though it needs interpretation. But without God, what is nature, with all the steadfastness of the laws which govern it, but a poor, weak thing fittingly imaged by this vine in which God pictures it—the very image of dependence, as it surely is, with ourselves, who are part of it, upon the One "in whom we live and move and have our being." Those who are but mere Danites of Ir-shemesh (Jo-h. xix. 41) find, spite of their joy in nature, nothing finally but perplexity, as the Preacher did (Eccl. viii. 17). The *Comtist*, with his worship of humanity, may illustrate in a very forcible way man's need and the vanity of all attempts to meet it. He is most surely one who is putting the vine-branch to his nose, and imagining himself the worshiper that he is not; for who, after all, can worship himself, much as he may desire it?

But here, then, is the end of that which we saw in the beginning, in the image of jealousy. This is what all men's imaginations come to. They cannot get beyond the nature of which they are part, and they cannot get beyond the perplexity that is in nature, the vanity written upon all that is merely "under the sun." Yet thank God, there is a better Sun soon to appear as Sun of righteousness upon the world, and with healing in His wings. Then shall men find how the types of nature are prophecies of what is in God's thoughts for us; and then shall the vines with their tender grapes give a good smell; not alienating the heart from God, but drawing it to Him.

Here, then, the evidences of Israel's condition are complete. Surely, noth-

And, behold, six men came from the way of the upper gate, which is turned toward the north, and every man with his destroying weapon* in his hand; and in the midst of them one man clothed in [i]linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side. And they went in, and stood beside the [j]brazen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel went up from off the cherubim, whereupon it was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed in linen who had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and Jehovah said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a [k]mark upon the foreheads of the men that [l]sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof. Unto the others

[i] *cf.* ch. 44 17, 18.
[j] *cf.* Rev. 15. 6. *cf.* Rev. 1. 13.
[j] *cf.* Rev. 8. 3.
[k] *cf.* Rev. 7. 3. *cf.* Rev. 9. 4. *cfr.* Rev. 13. 17. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.
[l] Jer. 13. 17. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 2.

* Or, "battle axe," as in Jer. 51: 20. Not the same word as in ver 1.

ing more is needed. Sentence is passed, therefore, and we have but to see the execution of it in what follows.

2. "And he cried in mine ears with a loud voice saying, Draw near, ye that have charge over the city, and every man with his destroying weapon in his hand." As already said, we are not to look at this as a judgment actually taking place at the time of the prophet's vision It is no doubt that which is really executed by the Chaldeans afterwards. For the purpose of the vision there is no need to distinguish in this way, or rather, the thought that is impressed upon us is precisely that which the bringing in of Nebuchadnezzar's host might conceal for many. The judgment is as direct from God as if the Chaldeans were not at all in question.

The six men that answer to this summons come from the north; and this was, as we know, the route of invasion by the Chaldean hosts. The number six speaks, as always, of divine sovereignty over evil.* This, alas, is now to be shown in judgment. Yet on this very account the judgment must be discriminative also, as the man in linen tells us: "In the midst of them one man clothed in linen with a writer's inkhorn by his side" Here, plainly, is that which speaks of peace in the midst of all that is adverse. "And they went in and stood beside the brazen altar." The altar had in a special way been outraged by the abominations practised, and the vengeance upon this is now to be executed When men refuse the only way of propitiation, there can be none, of course; and as the fitting corollary to this, "the glory of the God of Israel," distinctly emphasized as that, "went up from off the cherub whereupon it was, to the threshold of the house"—a significant action indeed, for we have nothing as yet here of the living creatures, which Ezekiel soon afterwards identifies with the cherubim of the mercy-seat. But as yet they are not identified; and we are to think of the abode of the glory as realized of old, which made "the Lord God that dwelleth between the cherubim" a familiar thought. He is seen for a moment there again, but only now to show distinctly the terrible change which is taking place. There is to be no more for Israel the truth

* It is also the number of man, the utmost limit of his power, and thus of evil in its assault upon what is of God. It enters into Goliath's stature (1 Sam. 17: 4), the dimensions of Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. 3: 1), and the number of the Beast (Rev. 13: 18), where, thrice repeated, it would assail the people of God. It is thus fittingly associated with this preliminary assault of the Chaldeans.—S. R.

he said in my hearing, Go through the city after him and [m]smite: let not your eye spare, neither have pity. Slay [n]utterly the old man, the young man, and the maiden, and little children, and women; but [o]come not near any one upon whom is the mark; and [p]begin at my sanctuary. And they began at the [q]old men who were before the house. And he said unto them, [r]Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain; go forth. And they went forth and smote in the city.

And it came to pass, while they were smiting, and I was left, that I [s]fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah, Lord Jehovah! wilt thou destroy all the remnant of Israel in thy pouring out of thy wrath upon Jerusalem? Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness; for they say, Jehovah hath [u]forsaken the land, and Jehovah seeth not. And as for me also, mine eye shall [v]not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense their [w]way upon their head. And, behold, the man clothed in linen who had the inkhorn by his side [x]reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.

m *cf.* 1Chron. 21. 16. *cf.* Jer. 48. 10.
n 2 Chron. 36. 17.
o *cf.* Zech. 2. 8.
p 1 Pet. 4. 17. *cf.* Jer. 25. 29.
q *cf.* ch. 8. 11.
r *cf.* Ps. 79. 1, 2.
s *cf.* Num. 14. 5. *cf.* Josh. 7. 6.
t *cf.* 2 Ki. 21. 16.
u ch. 8. 12.
v ch. 5. 11, etc.
w ch. 11. 21. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.
x *cf.* 2 Sam. 24. 13.

of a mercy-seat over which the cherubim bend down to see the blood of propitiation placed there. If the altar be rejected, there is no blood to be sprinkled upon it any more. But then He who dwells between the cherubim must go forth.

This, then, is what we have here; the full significance of it will be developed for us in what is soon to follow. But, first of all, He calls to the man clothed in linen who had the writer's inkhorn by his side, and bids him go through the midst of the city to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst" of it. The word for "mark" here is that which designates the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *tav*, which in the manner of writing of that time was a *cross*. Who can forbear, in connection with all that we have here, to realize the meaning of this? The judgment is judgment in behalf of the altar; or, to put it in another way, it is that which necessarily comes because the propitiation of the altar is no more. How significant, then, that those whom the judgment spares are just those marked for mercy *by the altar itself*, that is, by the sign of the cross, as the Christian heart at once interprets it. As far back as the days of Tertullian it has been interpreted in this way, and all the circumstances here confirm the interpretation. Here, then, is the sinner's shield at all times, the only hope of escape where all are sinners.

"Unto the others He said in my hearing Go through the city after him, and smite . . . and begin at my sanctuary." Judgment must begin at the house of God. It always begins there. In proportion to the privilege is the responsibility; and the outward nearness to God, with the heart away, only the more invites judgment. The house is completely gone as that. The blood defiles it; and in the midst of the awful judgment which is then poured out, the prophet

3 (x): The ban from the glory.

3. And I looked, and behold, in the expanse* that was over the head of the cherubim, there appeared above them as it were a [y]sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a [z]throne. And he spake unto the man clothed in linen, and said, Go in between the revolving [wheels], even under the cherub, and fill thy hands with [a]coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight. And the cherubim stood on the right side of the house when the man went in; and the [b]cloud filled the inner court. And the glory of Jehovah had risen from off the cherub, over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah's glory.

y ch. 1. 22. *cf.* Ex. 24. 10.
z *cf.* Rev. 4. 2.
a ch. 1. 13. *cf.* Ps. 18. 12, 13.
b *cf.* Ex. 40. 34, 35. *cf.* Is. 6. 1-4.

* The same as "firmament" in Gen. 1: 6.

pleads against the complete removal of Israel from before God's sight. But this has been already anticipated and answered. The only reply now is the urging of Israel's iniquity, which is now complete, and God can no longer spare.

3. Even yet the tale of judgment is not ended. What is of the utmost importance is now seen: the appearance of the heavenly throne, as the prophet had already seen it in the vision at Chebar, is to replace the earthly one which God can no more take. The removing is to be complete. He who was once, when the ark of old passed through Jordan, spoken of as "the God of all the earth," is now to be known simply as "the God of heaven." The earth is, as we see in Daniel, to be committed in fact to the Gentiles. Outwardly and visibly God's throne is no longer on earth. The throne of Gentile empire is, alas, how different! And yet it is the representative, responsibly, of the throne above. Though we cannot hope that this responsibility will now be discharged in a way more according to God than hitherto, yet, even so, God will rather have the Gentile with all his manifest alienation from God, than the Jew with his false profession and worse dishonor of Him by them who professed to draw nigh.

The judgment still proceeds; and it is the man clothed in linen, who has been hitherto the messenger of God's mercy, who is told to go in between the revolving wheels and fill his hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim and scatter them over the city. Here, of course, we have the pregnant figure of divine wrath; and it is at least an approach to that which we find afterwards, when the yet future day of wrath shall have arrived, and when this will be distinctively "the wrath of the Lamb." How terrible and how hopeless when it is His wrath! And yet how blessed to see and know that it is He who is eternal Love itself who will execute the judgment, and that, therefore, the one cannot be in contradiction to the other.

And now we are called to see more fully all the significance of that which is taking place. The cloud as yet fills the house; the glory of Jehovah, as we are reminded here, having risen up from off the cherub over the threshold of the house. The brightness of the glory is rather in the court itself now than in the house which it is leaving. The wings of the cherubim too are in motion, heard as the speech of the Almighty God Himself; and the cherubim are of course no longer those of the golden mercy-seat, which, as the memorials of a mere dead worship, are now left behind. The wheels of the former vision are

And the [c]sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God * when he speaketh. And it came to pass, when he had commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, Take fire from between the revolving [wheels], from between the cherubim, that he went in and stood beside the wheel. And the [d]cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim unto the fire that was between the cherubim, and took up [thereof], and gave it into the hands of him [that was] clothed in linen; and he took it and went out.

And there appeared in the cherubim the form of a [e]man's hand under their wings. And I saw, and behold, four [f]wheels beside the cherubim, one wheel beside one cherub, and another wheel beside another cherub; and the appearance of the wheels was as the look of a [g]topaz stone. And as for their appearance, they four had one likeness, as if a [h]wheel were within a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went; but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they [i]turned not as they went. And their whole body, and their

[c] ch. 1. 24. ch. 43. 2.
[d] *cf.* Heb. 1. 7.
[e] ver. 21. ch. 1. 8. *cf.* Gen. 18. 2.
[f] ch. 1. 15, etc.
[g] *cf.* ch. 28. 13.
[h] *cf.* ver. 11.
[i] *cf.* Jas. 1. 17.

* "El-shaddai."

here also, and ready for revolution; stayed for the moment, as the linen-clothed man goes in to take of the fire (which we have already seen at Chebar as going up and down between the cherubim), and which they now put into his hands. We are reminded here of what has been seen before, that there was the form of a man's hand under the wings of the cherubim. Human hands, we need not doubt, are to execute that judgment which, nevertheless, is itself the wrath of God.

Attention is once more called particularly to the wheels. We have them just as they appeared at Chebar, one wheel beside each cherub, with the look of the topaz in them, the display still of divine characteristics, though in human history, and the likeness as of a wheel within a wheel. There is added here that the whole body, and backs, and hands, and wings, and wheels, are full of eyes round about, the tokens of a knowledge which is indeed omniscient, although there is of course no omniscience in the creature; but they move by a wisdom higher than their own. They are, in fact, beginning as it were afresh their revolution in obedience to the call of the Voice to them, at the bidding of which they revolve This is no doubt the real meaning of the 13th verse. The pause of contemplation is over. The trial is over. The wheels that have halted as it were in suspense for the moment, are to revolve again; and we are bidden to take notice once more of the faces of the cherubim as we have seen them, only that now the cherub itself is identified with the face of the ox; which is foremost, therefore: for through all this, while judgment is before us, God has nevertheless His harvest-field in view.

But now the cherubim mount up, and at last we have the full identification of the living creature with the figures upon the mercy-seat. "The cherubim mounted up . . . this was the living creature that I saw by the river Chebar."

backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of [j]eyes round about; and they four had their wheels. As for the wheels, it was called to them in mine ears, Revolve.* And every one had four [k]faces: the first face was the face of a [l]cherub, and the second face the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. And the cherubim mounted up. This was the [m]living creature that I saw by the river Chebar. And when the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them: and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the wheels also turned not from beside them. When they stood, these stood; and when they mounted up, these mounted up with them: for the [n]spirit of the living creature was in them.

And the glory of Jehovah [o]departed from over the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim.

[j] ch. 1. 18, etc.
[k] ch. 1. 6, 10. etc.
[l] *cf.* Ps. 18. 10.
[m] ch. 1. 5, etc.
[n] *cf.* Ps. 139. 7.
[o] ver. 4. *cf.* Hos. 9. 12 with Mt. 23. 38, 39.

* Lit., "revolution," or, "turning."

"I knew," says the prophet just after this, "I knew that they were cherubim." There is the complete identification. It is, as it were, those figures upon the mercy-seat that are now manifesting life and activity.

It is very striking as to this word "cherub" that only two derivations seem to be at all satisfactory for it. The one is from the word *charab*, "to engrave," of which "cherub" would be but the past participle; thus, "the forms engraved." This suits (but alone suits) the cherubim of the mercy-seat. On the other hand, Hengstenberg contends for another derivation, which certainly exactly suits the meaning of the living creatures, according to which it is a compound word, *che-rov*, "as it were a multitude."* But here, *not* the mercy-seat is before us, but the Chebar vision. Significant it surely is that the one meaning now goes over as it were to the other. The one is, no doubt, the interpretation of the other. But, more than this, the reality is now taking the place of the mere symbol. The cherubim are indeed the living ones, in every way full of life, and standing for that multitudinous host of God which in all His creation ever obey His will.

But, alas, for Israel, the mercy-seat is left, and the cherubim now go forth from it. "And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight when they went forth, and the wheels beside them. And they stood at the entrance of the east gate of Jehovah's house;" and now also "the glory of the God of Israel is over them above." It is God who is leaving His earthly abode; and yet even as He leaves, everything assumes a greater clearness and a fuller glory. Notice once more, as we are called to it, the close dependence of the wheels upon the living creatures. As the cherubim mount up, the wheels mount up with them: they leave the earth. Thus as far as Israel is concerned, whatever suspension of the sentence there may be (and which we read in this lingering yet a while over the east gate), it is signified to us that they are soon, as it were, to revolve no more.

* Another derivation has been given—*che-reb* "As if pleading." These assessors to the throne are pleading for righteous judgment upon an apostate nation. At other times their pleading has been for mercy on the basis of the blood upon the mercy-seat. But *that* having been rejected by the people, nothing but judgment is left.—S. R.

And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight, when they went forth, and the wheels beside them: and they stood at the [p]entrance of the east gate of Jehovah's house; and the [q]glory of the God of Israel was over them above. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I [r]knew that they were cherubim. [s]Each one had four faces, and each four wings; and the likeness of a [t]man's hands was under their wings. And as for the likeness of their faces they were the faces which I had [u]seen by the river Chebar—their appearance and themselves: they went each in the [v]direction of his face.

p ch. 11. 22, 23 with ch. 43. 2.
q ver. 18.
r *cf.* Is. 6. 2. *cf.* Gen. 3. 24.
s ch. 1. 6, etc.
t *cf.* ver. 7. *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 44.
u ch. 1. 1.
v ch. 1. 12. *cf.* Dan. 9. 21.

As far as prophetic history is concerned, we see the truth of this fully at the present time. Prophecy as to them has ceased. We are in a gap of time which has for them, as it were, no more significance! And yet in this very way how sad a significance! In truth there was a longer suspense than this lingering over the east gate might seem to signify. God's mercy lingered, as we know, over the returned remnant until, in fulfilment of what the countless voices of the prophets had declared, He who was to come did come, and Messiah, Himself the King of glory, stood in their midst. But it was only to find rejection proportionately decisive and complete. The wings that would have sheltered Jerusalem had to be withdrawn. She had once more to be given up to enemies that would lay her in the dust and her children with her. The glorious vision in the midst is gone, but it has gone in fact to heaven, a heaven which is opened for us that we may see it there. The living creatures are connected with this throne above, which has just been intimated to us in Ezekiel. Israel abides outside of the glory without a mercy-seat and without a priest to represent them before it; but for us there is only a nearer, sweeter vision, a fuller reality, a gospel of the glory which is indeed no longer in the face of Moses but in the face of Him who, Man as He is, is "the image of the invisible God," the effulgence of it.*

4. We have what is now in some sense an appendix to what has gone before. The judgment having been definitely pronounced, the glory, as we have seen, yet lingers, and the mercy which is in God's heart expresses itself more freely, as one may say, because of the judgment pronounced. God's character being

* There seems to be a striking correspondence between this vision of the removal of the throne of God from the temple to the chariot of the cherubim, from earth to heaven, and the removal of God's testimony from the Jews and Jerusalem to the Church, as recorded in the book of Acts. During His life our Lord had declared to the Jews, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23: 38, 39), and the removal or transfer of the glory is seen taking place at Pentecost. The Jewish "house" being left desolate, the shekinah glory descends upon *believers*, instead of filling the temple of Jehovah (2 Chron. 13: 14). The persecution of the saints develops until in the stoning of Stephen the glory is seen in heaven rather than upon earth. Gradually the blessing extends from Jerusalem to Samaria, Cæsarea and Antioch—a Gentile city. The meeting at Jerusalem to consider the relation of the Gentiles to the law (Acts 15) may be considered as the final lingering upon the threshhold of the temple; but the widening circle of blessing reaching to Ephesus, Philippi and Corinth shows how a great change was impending. Paul's last visit to Jerusalem is, we may say, the final appeal of lingering love, and his closing words to the Jews at Rome (Acts 28: 28) indicate the complete removal of the shekinah from Judaism: "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it."—S. R.

4 (xi.): Scattering among the nations, but with mercy.

4. And the Spirit [w]lifted me up and brought me to the [x]east gate of Jehovah's house, which looketh eastward; and behold, at the entrance of the gate five and twenty men; and I saw in the midst of them [y]Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, [z]princes of the people. And he said unto me, Son of man, these are the men that [a]devise iniquity, and give wicked counsel in this city: who say, It is not the [b]time to build houses: this is the [c]caldron, and we are the flesh. Therefore [d]prophesy against them, prophesy, son of man. And the Spirit of Jehovah fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak, Thus saith Jehovah: Thus have ye said, O house of Israel; even the things that come into your mind, I know them. Ye have [e]multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets* thereof with the slain. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and it is the [f]caldron; but you shall one bring forth out of the midst of it. Ye have [g]feared the sword; and I will bring the sword upon you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will

w ch. 3. 12, 14. ch. 8. 3. cf. Acts 8. 39.
x ch. 10. 19.
y cf. ch. 8. 11.
z cf. Num. 14. cf. Num. 13. 3, etc. cf. Is. 1. 23.
a cf. ch. 14. 3.
b cf. ch. 12. 22.
c cf. Lk. 12. 19.
d ch. 13. 2, etc.
e ch. 7. 23. cf. 2 Ki. 21. 16.
f cf. ch. 24. 3-5.
g cf. Job 3. 25. cf. Prov. 1. 26, 27.

* Or, "courts."

cleared by this, He is free to show what is in His heart. At the same time, that there may be no false hope, the judgment is re-affirmed.

We are introduced once more to the leaders of the people who have, as we see, the people behind them. They are twenty-five men (the number of the priests as given before), but these are not the priests, though they represent, as one may say, all represented by the priesthood—that is, the people at large, and therefore are the same in number. Among them, two prominent men recall in their very names the false hopes which are misleading the people: Jaazaniah, "the Lord heareth," who is the son of Azzur, "the helper," with Pelatiah, "Jehovah delivers," the son of Benaiah, "Jehovah builds up." Their words correspond to their names. These are the men, as it is declared to Ezekiel, who supplant Jeremiah's exhortation to the captives to build houses in the place of their captivity, which was to be long (Jer. xxix. 5), by building in Jerusalem. Judgment is not near, they say. They infer, the time to act after this manner never will be. If Jerusalem, in the midst of all its enemies, may seem indeed to be but a caldron, and "we are the flesh in it," be it so, say they, we can accept that place with all that we find in it. The words, vague though they may seem, can scarcely be anything but mockery. They base themselves upon such prophecies as both Ezekiel and his contemporary Jeremiah were uttering against the place, which nevertheless still stood, defying its adversaries; so they argue that it will stand. These prophecies are idle talk, say they, suited enough for exiles whom the land has already cast out, and who have forfeited the privileges of the chosen people. For us, they say, we need not fear them.

Swiftly as the destruction was coming, God yet meets this with another prophetic warning. He who was acquainted with all their thoughts, would give them presently their full answer. Already the prophet sees the slain in

bring you forth out of the midst of it, and deliver you into the [h] hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you. Ye shall [i] fall by the sword; I will judge you in the [j] border of Israel; and ye shall [k] know that I am Jehovah. This shall not be your [l] caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst of it: I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall [m] know that I am Jehovah, in whose [n] statutes ye have not walked, neither have practised my ordinances, but have done [o] after the ordinances of the nations that are round about you.

And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah [p] died. And I [q] fell down on my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah, Lord Jehovah! wilt thou make a [r] full end of the remnant of Israel?

[h] *cf.* Is. 1. 7. *cf.* Hos. 7. 9. *cf.* Hos. 8 7.
[i] *cf.* Jer. 39. 6.
[j] vers. 7, 9.
[k] Ps 9. 16. ch. 6. 7, 14.
[l] *ctr.* ver. 3.
[m] ver. 10, etc.
[n] *cf.* Ps. 19. 8. ch. 20. 16.
[o] *cf.* Lev. 18. 3. *cf.* Deut. 12. 30, 31.
[p] *cf.* Nu. 16. 29. *cf.* Acts 5. 5.
[q] *cf.* Josh. 7. 6. chap. 9. 8.
[r] *cf.* Ex. 32. 10, 11. *cf.* Jer. 30. 11.

the city, slain at the hands of those who have misled them. These would fulfil the figure, and be, manifestly enough, the flesh in the caldron; but for themselves, the deceivers of the people, there waited still a severer judgment. God would not suffer the city to be even the tomb of such. The sword which they defied, even while they trembled at it, Jehovah would bring upon them, taking them out of the midst of the city which they had profaned, to fall by the sword in the border of Israel; they would witness before their death the calamities which they had brought upon the people. Cast out of the city, they would be judged in the border of Israel, and should learn there, to their utter confusion, that it was Jehovah who had been speaking to them—Jehovah, whose ordinances they had transgressed, while they claimed the privileges which belonged to His elect, and had gone after the ordinances of the nations around them.*

While Ezekiel thus prophesies, one of these leaders, the man whose name falsely spoke of deliverance and building up, Pelatiah, died. Vision it is still; yet one would naturally argue that this was, in fact, an actual occurrence at the time. Such a proof has constantly accompanied true prophecy, that God was speaking in it. There was to be no deliverance nor building up in the way that they imagined to themselves; but, as before, the heart of the prophet, standing truly before God for the people, trembles at the judgment manifested, and again there is a question in his heart, as has been uttered before, whether any can survive it "Ah, Lord Jehovah," he cries "wilt Thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?" But this had been already answered again and again.

It is but a moment of dismay; a confusion which the Lord answers in grace, explaining to him that these people, the objects of His divine judgment, are not such a remnant. His brethren, such as the prophet could truly own as kindred, those who truly represent the house of Israel, are not such men as these, but have characteristically their position among those very exiles to whom the then inhabitants of Jerusalem were saying, "Get you far from Jehovah," as having no claim upon Him. In their own possession the land still was, and

* For an Israelite especially it was a great dishonor not to be buried, or not in his own sepulchre. There seems to have been, in the care taken of the body and its burial, a hint of the resurrection to blessing. So Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23) To have no burial, as in the case of Jehoiakim (Jer. 22: 19) was like "the burial of an ass"—S. R.

And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, thy [s]brethren, even thy brethren, are the men of thy kindred* and all the house of Israel, the whole of it, unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem say, [t]Get you far from Jehovah: unto [u]us is this land given for a possession. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Though I have [v]removed them far off among the nations, and though I have [w]scattered them among the countries, yet I will be to them for a little [x]sanctuary† in the countries whither they have come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will even [y]gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where ye are scattered, and I will [z]give you the land of Israel. And they

* Or, "redemption." † Or, "a sanctuary for a little while."

s *cf.* Mt. 23. 13.
t *cf.* Deut. 13. 2.
u *cf.* ver. 3.
v *cf.* Lev. 26. 39 42.
w *cf.* Deut. 32. 26. *cf.* Jer. 31. 10
x *cf.* Is. 8. 14. *cfr.* Ps. 43. 3.
y *cf.* Jer. 24. 6. ch. 28. 25. ch. 36 24.
z *cf.* ch. 47. 13, etc. ch. 39. 25, 26.

so, they argued, it would continue. Was not the condition of those in exile a plain proof of the displeasure of God against them? Nay, says the Lord: it is amongst these that I am, and though it is true that in this national breach of the covenant they are removed far off among the nations and scattered among the countries, and though they have lost the recognized sanctuary in Jerusalem, yet I Myself will be to them for a little sanctuary in the countries whither they come. It was not indeed all that they were looking for, and might look for yet, it was an unseen Presence that was with them. The glory was unseen, save by such opened eyes as were those of Ezekiel. Nevertheless, in the "remnant according to the election of grace," as the apostle speaks afterwards, there was the assurance of what grace would be in its fulness when the time should come for the completion of those promises which God had unconditionally made, and which, therefore, He would fulfil. The sap of life was in the tree, although it was a tree cut down; and it would in due time manifest itself in the renewal of all they had departed from, and much more: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah"—it is the exiles plainly to whom He is turning, He has no promise for the doomed inhabitants of the city itself—"I will even gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where ye are scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." But along with this there must be and would be, therefore, the return of heart to God which would alone be the fulfilment of such promises. The terms of the new covenant must be fulfilled, and they would contemplate not the mere setting up again of the glory that had departed, but much more, the inward renewal, in which alone they would be manifested as the true seed of Abraham and the heirs of all that God had promised to him

Here, it is plain, we go far beyond the mere return of a remnant out of Babylon, such as took place under the Persian kings. This was, according to the Lord's figure, but a fig-tree planted in the vineyard, under conditions of fruit-bearing, which were not fulfilled; and when He who was to come, and did come, seeking fruit upon the fig-tree and finding none, according to His word it withered away. But this could not be the end of the promise—the free and unchangeable promise of God, which never can be taken away from the people to whom He made it. And the words of Jehovah here look on to an end not come even yet, but which through all the length of time elapsed He

shall come thither, and they shall [a]take away from thence all its detestable things and all its abominations. And I will give them [b]one heart, and I will put a [c]new spirit within you; and I will [d]take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a [e]heart of flesh; that they may may [f]walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be [g]my people, and I will be their God. But as for them whose [h]heart walketh heartily after their detestable things and their abominations, I will [i]recompense their way upon their heads, saith the Lord Jehovah.

And the cherubim [j]lifted up their wings, and the wheels were beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of Jehovah [k]went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the [l]mountain which is on the east side of the city. And the Spirit [m]lifted me up, and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God into [n]Chaldea, to them of the captivity; and the vision that I had seen went up from me. And I [o]spake unto them of the captivity all the things that Jehovah had shown me.

a ch. 37. 23.
b cf. Ps.86.11. Jer. 32. 39. *cf.* Zeph.3 9.
c ch. 36.26,27. *cf.* Jer.31.33. *cf.* Jno. 3. 3.
d cf. Zech.7. 12 with Eph. 4. 22.
e cf. 2 Ki. 5. 14 with Mt. 18. 3.
f cf. Deut. 4. 40. *cf.* Ps. 105. 45.
g Jer. 24. 7. ch. 37. 27. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 10.
h cf. Acts 7. 51.
i ch. 9. 10. ch. 22. 31.
j ch. 10. 19.
k ch. 9. 3. *cf.* Lk. 13. 34, 35.
l cf. Lk. 24. 50. *cf.* Zech. 14. 4.
m cf. ch. 8. 3.
n ch. 1. 1-3.
o cf. ch. 3. 4.

has never forgotten: "They shall come thither," says the Lord; "and they shall take away from thence all its detestable things, and all its abominations; and I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people and I will be their God." This, then, is afresh certified with all the assurance of God's word, and in plain view of all that has just before been denounced in the way of judgment. Nay, it is repeated here: "But as for them whose heart walketh heartily after their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their heads, saith the Lord Jehovah."

And now the breach between the city and the Lord is consummated: "And the glory of Jehovah went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city"—the Mount of Olives. How it reminds us of how the Lord Himself took leave of the same city from the same place! Refused by the world, and risen from the dead, He went up finally to heaven in the eyes of His disciples from the Mount of Olives once more. The angels prophesy His return, as Zechariah had prophesied it long before. For us, the Mount of Olives with its Bethany home, is the witness of what is ours in the meantime. Olivet is the memorial of the spiritual unction which has been poured out upon us, anointed with which we wait for His return. Meanwhile, in widowed loneliness, God's earthly city waits also; but in how different a manner! Her captivity has been unbroken ever since, and it is to the men of the captivity that the prophet now returns. "The Spirit lifted me up and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God unto Chaldea to them of the captivity, and the vision that I had seen went up from me." In principle, the story is told out, although there may be many and important details that are to follow. What a word for the elders who had been waiting all this time the

SECTION 2 (Chaps. xii.—xv).

The judgments in detail.

1 (xii.): The king in exile, and the land desolate.

1. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou [p]dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have [q]eyes to see, and see not; which have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house. Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee the baggage of an [r]exile, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt [s]remove from thy place to another place before their eyes; perhaps they will see, though they are a rebellious house. And bring forth thy baggage by day in their sight as an exile's baggage, and thou thyself go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into exile. [t]Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby. In their sight shalt thou bear upon thy shoulder, and [u]carry it forth in the dark; thou shalt [v]cover thy face that thou see not the ground:* for I have set thee for a [w]sign unto the house of Israel. And I did so as I

p ch. 2. 3, 6-8. *cf.* Rom. 10. 21.
q Is. 6. 9. Jer. 5. 21. Mt. 13.13,14.
r *cf.* 2 Chr.36. 17-21.
s *cf.* Jer.15 4. *cf.* Jer. 24.9.
t *cf.* Jer. 52. 7. *cf.* 1 Sam.19. 12.
u *cf.* Jer. 15. 9.
v *cf.* Jer. 52. 11.
w Is. 8. 18. ch. 4. 3. ch. 24. 24. *cf.* Is. 20. 3.

* Or, "land."

result of this prophetic rapture: "I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that Jehovah had shown me."

Sec. 2.

The story having been told, we have in what follows the detail of exactly measured judgment in relation to the various classes.

1. First of all, therefore, we begin with the king, of so great significance in Judah as the one who "sat upon the throne of the Lord" in Jerusalem (1 Chr. xxix. 23). The removal of the king means, therefore, that the representative throne exists no more. Yet how many hopes had been centred in it! Throughout the history of the Judges we find that the great necessity was that a king should come. Even if men did that which was right, it was "that which was right in their own eyes;" that only made the need more apparent. There was no king yet in Israel. When he came, he was ushered in by the prophet, as we know, so in Ezekiel the prophet announces his removal; for the prophet remains through all this time the witness for God and of His ideal in government; but from the very first, we see how the ideal of the people diverged from God's thought. Saul, who was really the man of the people, as such had to be removed; and David, though the man after God's heart, fails in his turn, and is himself the witness that, although in his house the promise of sovereignty remains, yet it must be fulfilled in some higher way than man can accomplish it—the true King must come. Whatever faint shadows of Him there might be, as shadows they could not be permanent, and as they more and more departed from their character as witnesses to Him that was to come, always the more clear it becomes that they must pass. The meaningless king must be removed; he cannot be left for a reproach as God's king—an imbecile, and worse. Ezekiel is now summoned, therefore, to announce his definite removal from the land, no more to return there. During the time in which the desolate land keeps its sabbaths, which it keeps yet, it cannot prosper in their hands; thus we have here the connection of the two parts of the prophecy.

was commanded: I brought forth my baggage by day as an exile's baggage, and in the evening I digged through the wall with my hand; I brought it forth in the dark, and bare it upon my shoulder in their sight.

And in the morning the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, [x]What doest thou? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, This [y]burden [concerneth] the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that are among them. Say, [z]I am your sign: as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall go into exile, into captivity. And the [a]prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the dark, and shall go forth; they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby; he shall cover his face that he may [b]not see the ground with his eyes. My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will bring him to [c]Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall [d]die there.* And I will [e]scatter toward every wind all that are about him to help him, and all his hosts; and I will draw out the [f]sword after them. And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries. But I will leave a [g]few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may [h]declare all their abominations among the nations whither they shall go; and they shall [i]know that I am Jehovah.

x ch. 17. 12. ch. 24. 19. ch. 37. 18.
y *cf.* Is. 22. 1. *cf.* Mal. 1. 1.
z ver. 6. *cf.* Is. 8. 18. *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 11.
a *cf.* Jer. 39. 4.
b *cf.* Jer. 39. 7.
c *cf.* Jer. 32. 4, 5.
d *cf.* ch. 17. 16.
e *cf.* Deut. 4. 27. *cf.* Deut. 28. 64. ch. 5. 2, 12.
f *cf.* Deut. 28. 65, 66.
g ch. 6. 8–10. *cf.* Jer. 42. 2.
h *cf.* Lev. 26. 39–42.
i vers. 15, 20, etc.

* Or, "and there shall he die."

All is simplicity itself with regard to the prophecy, however little they, who were a rebellious house, as Ezekiel was told from the beginning, might see what was meant. Eyes they had to see, and saw not; ears they had to hear, and heard not; yet God acts for Himself, and unhindered by this incapacity on their part. Ezekiel is instructed to prepare the baggage of an exile and to remove by day in their sight. "Perhaps they will see," says Jehovah; for we know there were still those who were capable of doing so; and, as for the rest, God would still make things so plain that on His part there should be no possible misunderstanding—nothing wanting to complete conviction.

He is to gather together his baggage by day, but himself was to go forth at evening, under the cover of darkness, digging through the wall to carry off just what he can bear upon his shoulder, and no more; covering his face also, so as not to see the ground—a pregnant sign to the house of Israel of what was to take place. All this, of course, was not in vision, but in reality; expressly intended to awaken question by those who saw these enigmatical doings, and would naturally inquire into what they meant. He is to tell them that the burden concerns the prince still in Jerusalem, with all the signs of his royalty about him, but who is to go forth into exile, into captivity, with no sign of his forfeited rank, but as a mere ordinary fugitive; and even so, not to be allowed

And the [j]word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, eat thy bread with [k]quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with care;* and say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem, concerning the land of Israel: [l]They shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink their water with astonishment, because her [m]land shall be left desolate of all that is in it for the [n]violence of all them that dwell therein; and the cities that are inhabited shall be laid [o]waste, and the land shall be a desolation; and ye shall [p]know that I am Jehovah.

And the [q]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are [r]prolonged, and every vision faileth? Tell them, therefore, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will make this proverb to [s]cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at [t]hand, and the matter* of every vision. For there shall be no more

j vers. 21, 26. ch. 13. 1, etc.
k *cf.* ch. 4. 9-17.
l *cf.* Deut. 28. 38-40, 49-51.
m *cf.* Lev. 26. 33. *cf.* Jer. 4. 27.
n *cf.* Ps. 107. 34. *cf.* Is. 59. 6.
o *cf.* Lev. 26. 31, 33. *cf.* Neh. 2. 17. *cf.* Jer. 4. 7.
p ver. 16, etc.
q ver. 17, etc.
r ver. 27. *cf.* ch. 11. 3. *cf.* Mt. 24. 48.
s *cf.* ch. 18. 2, 3.
t *cf.* Joel 2. 1. *cf.* Zeph. 1. 14. *cf.* Rev. 1. 3.

* Or, "anxiety." † Lit., "word."

to go safely away, but to be taken in the net by Him whose hand was acting through the Chaldeans. And yet the very land to which he would be removed he should not see, although he should die there. His eyes, in fact, were put out, according to a common custom of the Babylonians in such cases. His following would be all dispersed, the mass of them slain by the sword, by famine and by pestilence, and the few left would be but as witnesses of the state of things amongst them which had provoked Jehovah's wrath; for in all this, as it is repeated again and again, they were to know that He was Jehovah.

To this burden concerning the king, there is appended, as naturally connected with it, the burden of the land left waste and desolate; for as long as the king continued, even though he might be but the shadow of royalty at the last, this was a testimony that the covenant between God and Israel was yet not wholly gone. The land itself also, as Jehovah's land, which they enjoyed as sojourners with Him, as His guests, was another sign of this: it could not pass wholly into other hands; and in this way even still remains, until the people of God are brought back to enjoy it. Thus, in one way or another, the curse of barrenness must be upon it. The hands that should have wrought in its harvests are scattered far away, and the few that remain, remain but to eat their bread with anxiety and drink their water with astonishment, while their cities should be laid waste and the land a desolation—and this, though Jehovah were His covenant name, that all might know Him to be the Unchangeable, as His name implied.

To this is appended another solemn testimony against the vain hopes of those who, expecting the message of peace which the false prophets had given them, and grounding it upon all the promises to their fathers, were already realizing the failure of their vision, which was no true vision. How often people imagine a failure of God's word, when the failure is only that of hopes falsely built upon His word! But the true word was not of smooth things, but of

any vain vision nor [u]flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am Jehovah; I will speak, and the [v]word that I shall speak shall be performed; it shall be no more deferred; for in [w]your days, O rebellious house, will I speak the word and will perform it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

And the [x]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days, and he prophesieth of times that are [y]far off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: There shall none of my words be [z]deferred any more, but the word which I speak shall be performed, saith the Lord Jehovah.

2 (xiii.): A prophecy against false prophets.

1 (1-16): The prophets.

2. [1] And the [a]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy [b]against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say unto them that prophesy out of their [c]own heart, Hear ye the word of Jehovah:

[u] ch. 13. 23. *cf.* Is. 50. 10.
[v] ver. 28. Is. 55. 11.
[w] *cf.* Dan. 5. 30.
[x] ch. 13. 1, etc.
[y] ver. 22. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 4. *cf.* Lk. 17. 26 37.
[z] *cf.* Hab. 2. 3. *cf.* Rev. 10. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 55. 10, 11.
[a] ch. 12 1, etc.
[b] ver. 17. *cf.* Mt. 7. 15. *cf.* 1 Jno 4. 1.
[c] Jer. 14. 14. Jer. 23. 16. Jer. 27. 10.

judgment, which would not linger now. It was at hand. In the very days of those that spoke, the Lord Jehovah would fulfil at once that which He was declaring He would bring upon them. Again the word comes re-affirming this: "Son of man, behold they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days, and he prophesieth of times that are afar off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: There shall none of my words be deferred any more, but the word which I speak shall be performed, saith the Lord Jehovah."

2. [1] When the priesthood (the first link between God and Israel) failed, the prophet was raised up extraordinarily of God, in sovereign goodness, to stand between the people and Himself. When the kings failed afterwards, the prophet again came forward, the sign, on the one hand, of the broken condition of things, and yet on the other, of God's patience, waiting for possible recovery. Priest and king belonged to the *established* order of things, and therefore their office passed in the ordinary way from father to son. With the prophet it was otherwise. There was no provision for the continuance of the prophet. He was specially raised up by the goodness of God, as His messenger, to bring His word to the people in such a condition of things as was, or should have been, exceptional altogether. Alas, the adversary of God and man might find his opportunity in this very way to imitate that which is of God, bringing forth prophets of his own invention to speak falsehood as from God, so as to lead more entirely astray their followers.

Naturally, therefore, Ezekiel now turns to these, to prophesy to and against these prophets—prophesying out of their own hearts and seeing nothing. The word which the prophet spoke was not simply something evolved out of a man's "inner consciousness," as men represent it to-day, a divination as it were of a spiritual mind prognosticating the future from what he saw before him. On the contrary, it was no human judgment that they professed to bring, but the judgment of God Himself. Thus it was not their own saying, but Jehovah's saying. And so thoroughly was this known in Israel, that the false prophets themselves had to go as far as this in their pretension. If they saw nothing, they must

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit, and have [d]seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets have been like [e]jackals in waste places. Ye have not gone up into the breaches, nor made up a [f]wall around the house of Israel, to stand in the battle in the day of Jehovah. They have seen vanity and [g]lying divination that say, Jehovah saith! and Jehovah hath [h]not sent them; and they make [men] [i]hope that the word will be fulfilled. Have ye not seen a vain vision and spoken a lying divination when ye say, Jehovah saith—and I have not spoken? Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because ye speak vanity, and have seen a lie, therefore, behold, I am [j]against you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And my hand shall be against the prophets that see vanity, and that divine a lie: they shall [k]not be in the council of my people, neither shall they be [l]written in the registry of the house of Israel, and they shall not [m]enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall [n]know that I am the Lord Jehovah. Because, even because they

d *cf.* Zech. 10. 2.
e *cf.* Ps. 59. 6, 14.
f *cf.* ch. 22 30. *cf.* ch. 14. 14 with Ps. 106. 23, 30
g *cf.* Jer. 14. 14. ch 22. 28.
h Jer. 23. 21, 32. *cf.* Jer. 27. 14, 15. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 1.
i *cf.* ver. 22. *cf.* Jer 23 14. *ctr.* Hag. 1. 5.
j Jer. 23. 31. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 5. *ctr.* Rom. 8. 31.
k *cf.* Ps. 1. 5. *cf.* Mt. 7. 22, 23.
l *cf.* Ezra 2. 59, 62. *cf.* Neh. 7. 5. *cf.* Ps. 69. 28. *ctr.* Lk. 10 20. *ctr.* Mal. 3. 16, 17.
m ch. 20. 13.
n ch. 11. 10, etc.

feign that they saw. But the true heart of the prophet was not seen in them, nor, therefore, the true voice of Jehovah heard. The priest's breastplate was typical of what made the priest the true expression of the Lord's mind towards His people. It contained the Urim and Thummim, by which the priest gave answer from God; the precious jewels which shone in it representing the various attributes of the Unchangeable. They were "the lights and perfections" of Him who is the true and perfect Light, abiding unalterably in Him as the lustre in the gem. But upon these jewels also the names of the people of God were indelibly engraved. Thus the priest bore upon his heart before God the interests of God's people, and God's interests, therefore, in His people. If the priest had now passed, and the king also, any one raised up of God as His prophet must be marked by these very characteristics. Thus, in Ezekiel's day, the prophets should have been men "gone up into the breaches," not ignoring them nor what had been the occasion of them, but proclaiming the faithful word of Jehovah, while at the same time seeking, if it might be, to build up the wall which had been broken down, that it might stand in the battle, even in the day of Jehovah.

But these false prophets had failed in all this. Great as was their pretension, it was as far as possible from the reality. "O Israel, thy prophets have been like jackals in waste places"—a significant figure indeed of those who preyed upon the corruption around, hiding from the light in the barren wilderness which could only furnish them the covert that they sought. In pretension they were angels of light indeed—as Satan's emissaries among God's people constantly are—but the evil which prospered around them bore them true witness. They had seen but vanity, says the Lord, and divined lies. They should not, therefore, be in the counsel of His people, nor written in the register of the house of Israel, nor possess themselves of that land which could be held only according to the tenure of the covenant. Thus they too must know that He was the Lord Jehovah. Yet these were the men that swarmed around in proportion

have seduced my people, saying, [o]Peace; and there is no peace; and one [p]buildeth up a wall, and lo, they daub it with [q]untempered [mortar]: say unto them that daub it with untempered [mortar], that it shall [r]fall: there shall be an [s]overflowing rain, and ye, O great [t]hailstones, shall fall, and a [u]stormy wind shall rend it. And lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said to you, [v]Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it? Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my wrath; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in wrath to consume it. So will I [w]break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered [mortar], and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered; and it shall fall, and ye shall be [x]destroyed in the midst thereof; and ye shall [y]know that I am Jehovah. Thus will I [z]accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon [a]them that daub it with untempered [mortar], and will say unto you, The wall is not, nor they that daubed it—the [b]prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem and who see a vision of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord Jehovah.

2 (17-23): The prophetesses.

2 And thou, son of man, set thy face against the [c]daughters of thy people who prophesy out of their [d]own heart, and prophesy thou against them, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the women that

o Jer. 6. 14. Jer. 8. 11. *cf.* Mic. 2 11. *cf.* Is. 57. 21. *ctr.* Col 1.20 with Rom. 5 1.
p *cf.* Gen. 11. 4. *cf.* Gal. 2.18.
q ch. 22. 28. *cf.* Gal. 1. 8–10.
r *cf.* Ps. 62. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 17.
s ch. 38. 22. *cf.* Is. 28. 14–18. *cf.* Mt. 7. 24–27.
t *cf.* Job 38. 22, 23. *cf.* Is. 28. 2.
u *cf.* Dan. 7. 2. *cf.* Ps. 18 42. *cf.* Ps. 103. 16.
v *cf.* Is. 33 18. *cf.* Deut. 28. 52.
w *cf.* Rev. 11. 13.
x *cf.* Num. 31. 8.
y ver. 9, etc.
z *cf.* Jer. 51. 25. *cf.* Jer. 42. 18.
a *ctr.* 1 Cor. 3. 15.
b *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 24, 25.
c *cf.* Is. 3. 16; *cf.* Rev. 2. 20. d ver. 2; *cf.* Lk. 18. 11.

as the true prophet of the Lord was scarce, banding together, confirming one another's words, one building up a wall and another daubing it with untempered mortar, which could never stand the storm that was at hand. God would bring it down completely to the dust, so that the foundation upon which it was built would be discovered—a lie, all through, which could work but the destruction of those who trusted in it. For their prophesying of peace could but provoke war, and the pretension of security provoke God to sweep away the refuge of lies; for, however men misrepresent Him, Jehovah must still and evermore be the Lord; and as against the men who misrepresent Him the Lord will be found Jehovah—the unchanging One. This is the constant reiteration all the way through. Jehovah is arising in His own behalf when there remains as it were no longer any witness for Him.

2 But there were not only prophets, but prophetesses. Beautiful it is to see that, when it is God's grace that is raising up help, the expression of it will be found in those who in their very weakness will thus be most competent witnesses. There were no priestesses in Israel; nor, saving usurpation, any queens that reigned in their own right, but there were prophetesses. The grace of God did not in the same way regard distinctions such as these. Nay, if the men of Israel failed, the rise of a prophetess might be a more signal rebuke to them—thus Deborah, in the days of the Judges, and others at other times. And if after all there were but few women of this class, we know how slow God's people are to accept the grace which thus visits them in its fulness of blessing.

sew [e]cushions upon all armholes,* and that make [f]veils for the head of [persons of] every stature, to [g]catch souls. Will ye catch the souls of my people, and will ye [h]save your own souls alive? Will ye even [i]profane me among my people for handfuls of barley and for morsels of bread, to slay souls that [j]should not die and to save souls alive that should not live, by your [k]lying to my people that listen to lies? Wherefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold I am [l]against your cushions wherewith ye hunt souls, that they may fly away.* I will even [m]tear them from your arms, and I will let the souls go, the souls that ye catch, that they may fly away.† And I will [n]tear your veils, and [o]deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. Because with lies‡

* Literally, "upon all my wrists." † Or, "as birds." ‡ Or, "falsely."

e *cf.* Mic.3.5. *cf.* Rev 18.7.
f *cf.* Is. 30. 10. *cf.* Mt. 23. 16, etc. *cf.* Mt.15.14. *cfr.* Is. 25. 7.
g *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 14. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 6. *cf.* Hab. 1. 14, 15.
h *cf.* ch. 34. 16. *cf.* Jude 11.
i *cf.* Prov. 28. 21. *cf.* Mic.3.11; 7. 3 *cf.* Tit. 1. 11.
j ver 22.
k *cf.* Jer. 14. 14.
l ver. 8. *cf.* Is. 2. 12-17.
m *cf.* 2 Ki.18. 4.
n *cf.* Mt. 21. 12, etc.
o *cf.* Ps. 124. 7.

And God's delight is shown in various instances, as in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, who claimed their portion in Jehovah's land when a weaker faith might have thought it humility to make no claim. The heart that counts upon God's grace, how much may it enjoy of the grace it counts upon! Grace is the same grace towards all, and God answers faith. Alas, we ourselves put limit where God puts none. If we make our portion in the land the whole question, we may hesitate to ask for the needed springs—which Achsah did—to make the very land that is our own, fruitful! Beautiful is the recognition, which even a false prophecy is forced to make, as to the sovereign grace of God in the instruments that it employs. But, alas, even such precious grace as this could find those who would pervert it, and Ezekiel has now to utter Jehovah's voice against the daughters of his people, who prophesied out of their own heart merely.*

The words that describe the conduct of these have been differently interpreted. What was this sewing of cushions upon all arm-holes, and making veils for the head of every stature to catch souls? Many have interpreted these things literally, as magic fillets worn by these women after the manner of sorceresses, to impose upon their dupes, and which perhaps imposed upon themselves also. But this seems nothing but conjecture; there is no proof, if it be not in the words before us; and while it is easy to recognize the feminine character of these doings, it is surely not necessary to make them seamstresses for such occasions, nor would it mark them out with any plausibility as prophetesses of Jehovah. On the other hand, we may easily read Ezekiel's language here as

* It has been suggested, by Hengstenberg, that these may not have been literal women, but effeminate men, whom in derision the prophet calls prophetesses, and who address themselves to the love of luxury and pleasure which appeals to effeminate natures. "*She* that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6). It is very significant that it was "that woman Jezebel who calleth herself a prophetess" (Rev. 2:20) who is the type of the luxurious seductions of the "great harlot" described in Rev. 17, 18. These seductions were for ease and a smooth path by which the people were ensnared, and these snares might well be spread by men who had lost all true manliness of spirit. "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them."—S. R.

ye have [p] grieved the heart of the righteous [man] whom I have not made sad, and [q] strengthened the hands of the wicked [man] that he should not return from his wicked way, to save his life; therefore ye shall no more see vanity nor divine divinations. I will even [r] deliver my people out of your hand; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

3 (xiv. 1-11): Against the seekers of oracles.

3. And there came certain of the [s] elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their [t] heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be [u] inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak to them and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I, Jehovah, will answer him [v] according to this—according to the multitude of his idols: that I may [w] take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all [x] estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say

p *cf.* Mt. 23. 4. *cf.* 1 Sam. 1. 13-16.
q *cf.* Jer. 23. 14.
r *cf.* Is. 46. 4.
s ch. 8. 1. ch. 20. 1. ch. 33. 31.
t *cf.* Eph. 5. 5.
u *cf.* 2 Ki. 3. 13. *cf.* Mk. 8. 12.
v *cf.* ver. 9 with 1 Ki. 22. 15-23.
w *cf.* Is. 8. 14, 15. *cf.* Is. 28. 13
x *cf.* Is 2. 6. *cf.* Ps. 58. 3.

figurative. They did in fact, by their prophecies of soft and pleasant things, sew cushions upon the arm-holes, upon which those who listened to them might repose themselves and be at rest; while the veils for the head might, on the one hand, suit what was a mere false humility, and be, on the other, a blinding of the eyes, so as not to see things as they were. These prophetesses sold cheap their sophistries, as Jehovah says, working destruction by them, perverting judgment, so as "to slay souls that should not die, and to save souls alive that should not live." Here again Jehovah must come in to manifest Himself and tear from them the cushions which were upon their own arms also for repose—their false confidence, which infected others. As the constant repetition shows, Jehovah must be and must prove Himself, Jehovah. No lie can avail before Him who is the living Truth, and before whose presence every delusion must at last be broken and pass away; and then what would be the condition of those who had prophesied deceits? Would they catch souls of His people and yet save their own souls alive?

3. The idolatry in the heart of those who professed to be inquiring of the Lord is now exposed in the very elders of Israel who should have led the people in Jehovah's ways, and from whom the revival of the nation should have been looked for. Certain of them come and sit before the prophet, and before they speak God anticipates their inquiry. Only the fact that they are elders is given, those who should have the wisdom of age, therefore, and from whom came the judges of the people. Moreover, they had before their eyes the judgment of God already taking effect upon the nation; a judgment of which they themselves, in their scattered and captive condition, were witnesses. Yet, among those who thus have a decorous outside of orthodoxy, the heart is found, for the most part at least, gone after the common idolatry. It was in this way that false prophets rose up among the true, finding their inspiration, as we presently see, from the desire of the people who, under whatever name, really coveted gods of their own—*manageable* gods, as the idols certainly were, although the

unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [y]Return ye, and turn yourselves from your idols, and [z]turn away your faces from all your abominations. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the [a]strangers that sojourn in Israel, that [b]separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet to inquire of me by him, I Jehovah will answer him by myself; and I will [c]set my face against that man and will make him an astonishment, for a sign and [d]proverbs, and I will [e]cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall [f]know that I am Jehovah. And if the prophet be enticed,* and shall speak a word, I Jehovah have [g]enticed that prophet; and I will stretch out my hand against him, and will [h]destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall [i]bear their iniquity: the iniquity of the [j]prophet shall be even as the iniquity of the enquirer; that the house of Israel may go [k]no more astray from me, nor defile themselves any more with all their transgressions, but that they may be [l]my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord Jehovah.

* Or, "deceived."

y ch. 33. 11.
z *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9.
a *cf.* Nu. 11. 4.
b *cf.* Lk. 15. 13.
c Lev. 20. 3, 5, 6. Jer. 21. 10. Jer. 44. 11. Amos 9. 4. 1 Pet. 3. 12.
d *cf.* Nu. 26. 10.
cf. 1 Cor. 10. 6.
cf. 2 Pet. 2. 6.
e Ps. 34. 16, etc.
f ch. 13. 23, etc.
g *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 23.
cf. Jer. 4. 10
cf. Mt. 24. 11 with 2 Thess. 2. 11.
h *cf.* Jer. 28. 17.
cf. ch. 11. 13
i *cf.* Jer. 31. 30.
j Jer. 14. 15, 16.
cf. 2 Pet. 2. 15.
k *cf.* ch. 34. 29; *cf.* ch. 16. 63; *cf.* Deut. 13. 11.
l ch. 36. 28; *cf.* Zech. 13. 9.

power of Satan was not deficient in them. They were now treating Ezekiel as a false prophet himself, and thus putting Jehovah also among the false gods, as one who could be flattered, wheedled and bribed into conformity with their own desires. How strange is the mystery of the human heart that must, after all, have a god, and yet will not bow to him! — must have a god, yet in reality be its own god; "*serving*," but even with professing Christians, "serving their own belly," as Scripture says! What a strange and terrible conflict this between their interests and their convictions; and what folly it writes upon this creature of God, intended for communion with Himself, but who has made itself so incapable of it! Their false gods are but the expression of how their hearts and their convictions are opposed to one another.

God therefore meets them, as we see, first of all with the assurance of how truly He discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, arresting the very inquiry which is upon their lips by giving them the answer which indeed they do not seek, but with all the evidence that it is *God* who gives them answer. It was but their doom, however; it could be nothing else, as they were but too truly representatives of the house of Israel as a whole, and are addressed therefore as such. They are to learn that the prophet, who truly represents Jehovah, is no advocate to make terms between the people and their offended God. Thus God declares that if they approach Him through one upon whom they can work more easily than upon Himself, in hope that such an one can draw God to be of their mind, they shall find that He will answer for Himself, to manifest the more His own unchangeable nature. He therefore declares the doom of those who set up their idols in their hearts, yet came to the prophet with an

4 (12 23): The failure of mercy.

4. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the [m] land sinneth against me by working unfaithfulness, and I stretch out my hand upon it and break the [n] staff of the bread thereof and send famine upon it, and cut off man and beast from it, though these three men, [o] Noah, Daniel, and Job, should be in it, they should deliver but their [p] own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah. If I cause evil [q] beasts to pass through the land, and they bereave it, and it becometh a desolation, so that no one [r] passeth through because of the beasts, though these three men should be in it, [as] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver [s] neither sons nor daughters; they only should be delivered, and the land should be a desolation. Or if I bring the [t] sword

m cf. Is. 24. 20. *cf.* Lam. 1. 8.
n Lev. 26. 26. Is. 3. 1. ch. 5. 16, 17.
o vers. 16, 18, 20 *cf.* Jer. 15. 1. *cf.* Gen. 6. 8, 9. *cf.* Dan. 9. 21. *cf.* ch. 28. 3. *cf.* Job 1. 5.
p ctr. Gen. 18. 23 33 with Jer. 5. 1.
q Lev. 26. 22. *cf.* 1 Ki. 20. 36. *cf.* 2 Ki. 17. 25. *cf.* Jer. 15. 3.
r cf. Jer. 9. 12. *cf.* Is. 34. 10. *s ctr.* Gen. 7. 13. *t* Lev. 26. 25; *cf.* ch. 32. 11, 12.

outward semblance of obedience to inquire from Jehovah. He would answer for Himself—not merely by the prophet—setting His face against such, making them a sign and a proverb by His dealing with them. Moreover, if they could entice, as, alas, they did entice prophets professedly of God, to utter a word such as they coveted to hear, Jehovah might permit them to have the message which they craved from such a prophet, but they would both alike find the penalty of their iniquity, and be destroyed from among the people whom God would have in result as His people, and to whom He would be God, according to the name by which He was in covenant with them, the unchangeable Jehovah.

4. A solemn appendix to this follows. These elders would fain have had an answer of peace without righteous foundation to it, and would have made the prophet the mediator of such a peace. God answers them now, although not with a direct message to them, but as it were with His face turned away; addressing the prophet merely, He announces the principles of His own holy government under which they and all must come. Thus "the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, when a land sinneth against Me by working unfaithfulness, and I stretch out my hand upon it and break the staff of bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and cut off man and beast from it: though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, should be in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah."

Thus, in the condition of which the Lord speaks, and in which the people of Israel were at this time, no human mediation could be at all available, even of the righteous. Of these, God chooses three who might of all men be most suited as intercessors; if even *they* were before Him at the present time, their pleading would alter nothing in such a case. Noah had stood at the wreck of one world, and alone was spared with his house to begin another; when the after-world was once again departing far from Him, Job was declared by God Himself to have no equal upon the earth. Noah and Job had long since passed away. It is remarkable to find Daniel associated with such men as these—a young man as Daniel surely was at this time, and in the court of the king of Babylon; but this has no doubt to do with his fitness to represent hopes that might be very much centered in him; his great place with Nebuchadnezzar being gained in so remarkable a way, and so conspicuous. It had been, too, by

upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it, and these three men should be in it, [as] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only themselves should be delivered. Or if I send a [u]pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast, and Noah, Daniel, and Job should be in it, [as] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither son nor daughter, they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: How much [v]more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast. But behold, there shall be left in it those that [w]escape, who shall be brought out of it, sons and daughters. Behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings; and ye shall be [x]comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, as to all that I have brought upon it. And they shall comfort you, when ye see their way and their doings; and ye shall know that I have [y]not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

u ch. 38. 22. *cf.* 2 Sam. 24. 15. *cfr.* 1 Ki. 8. 37-39.
v ch. 5. 17. *cf.* Amos 4. 6-12.
w *cf.* ch. 6. 8-10. *cf.* Is. 6. 13. *cf.* Is. 17. 4-6.
x *cf.* Rom. 2. 24. *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 14. *cf.* Is. 52. 5. *cf.* ch. 36. 20, 23. *cf.* ch. 20. 43. *cf.* Lev. 26. 39. *cf.* Hos. 5. 15.
y *cf.* Jer. 22. 8, 9. *cf.* Deut. 29. 24, 25. *cf.* 1 Ki. 9. 8, 9.

actual prevailing with God in prayer—prayer which had availed for others as much as for himself, a sample of the "effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous," of which James speaks. It was as one of these practically righteous ones his prayer had prevailed with the Lord. It was not the favor of man that had raised up Daniel, but the favor of God. How much might be hoped for from such a conspicuous representative of God in a day like that! Yet, while recognizing Daniel's eminent place, and associating him with the prominently righteous of by-gone generations, all human hopes that might be based upon this are refused. Not Noah, Daniel and Job together could avert a judgment which was already in fact begun!* Indeed, if only one of God's four sore plagues had been in question, they could not have turned it away; but these four plagues were all of them together now upon the land.

The sentence had been pronounced; judgment was already begun; how vain to think of altering the word which had thus gone forth from God! All that remained was to acquiesce in it; and in a strange and terrible way would God work, as He assures Ezekiel, to produce this acquiescence. There should

*There seems a contrast here too with the Lord's mercy when there is the least indication of a possibility of any returning to Him. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now . . . if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment . . . and I will pardon it" (Jer. 5: 1). So in Abraham's intercession for Sodom, God declared He would spare the city if but ten righteous were found there. It is to be noted that Abraham ceased asking for any further lowering of the number; as long as he asked, God granted his request. "Ye are the salt of the earth;" but the time comes, as in the days of Noah, when the salt was taken away and the corrupt earth left to its doom. So will it be at the coming of the Lord for His church. A similar moral state is here described by Ezekiel. The testimony of the few faithful ones, like Jeremiah, was helpless in the face of universal apostasy. Therefore nothing but judgment was left.—S. R.

5 (xv.): Israel a fruitless vine. Their responsibility and judgment.

5. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is the wood of the [z] vine more than any wood—the vine-branch, which is among the trees of the forest? Shall [a] wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will [men] take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is given to the [b] fire for fuel: its two ends that the fire consumed and the midst of it is burned;* is it fit for [any] work? Behold, when it was whole, it was used for no work; how much less when the fire has consumed it and it is burned. Shall it yet

z *cf.* Ps. 80. 8-15. *cf.* Is. 5. 1, etc. *cf.* Jno. 15. 1, etc. *cf.* ch. 17. 6.
a *cf.* Judg. 9. 12, 13. *ctr.* Deut. 32. 32, 33.
b Jno. 15. 6. *cf.* Zech 11. 2. *cf.* Is. 27. 11.

* Or, "dried out."

be left in Jerusalem a remnant who would escape, and be brought out of it, sons and daughters: "Behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings; and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, as to all that I have brought upon it; yea, they shall comfort you when ye see their way and their doings, and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it." Such language is as unmistakable as solemn. This spared remnant, alas, a remnant not of the righteous, but of the wicked, after all God's mercy to them would demonstrate by their very doings the necessity of God's judgment. God would be vindicated in such a way that every upright heart must acquiesce in it.

5. And still there is a supplement, as we may say, even to this. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is the wood of the vine more than any wood?—the vine-branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?" The vine, as we know, is of use simply for one thing, for its fruit. If it bear no fruit, there is no reason for its existence. What is its wood? Compare it, says the Lord, with those trees of the forest among which it twines its branches. Has it wood like their wood? Can you manufacture anything from it? or can it serve any purpose? Only for one thing is it of the least use, it is for the fire.* And, as already shown, God was acting thus with regard to Israel. Its two ends, the kingdom of Ephraim and the kingdom of Judah alike, were manifestly being consumed in the fire which was burning the whole of it. How useless now to expect anything from what was so manifestly a mere brand for the burning! Thus it was with the inhabitants of Jerusalem; at the time the prophet spoke they were as between two fires from both sides—Egypt and Babylon—ready to lay hold of them; and to the fire they would be given up. That which they dreaded would come upon them; they should know that He was Jehovah when He set His face in unchangeable holiness against them.

One cannot but remember, in connection with what is here, the Lord's word

* Israel had been brought as a vine out of Egypt (Ps. 80: 8). Everything had been done to secure fruit. The heathen had been displaced, it had been cared for, and had flourished, but all had been in vain. With a slight change of figure, the prophet Isaiah pleads with Israel, which had been planted as a vine in a very fruitful hill, fenced, guarded and tended, but which had borne only wild grapes. "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel... and He looked for judgment, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry" (Isa. 5: 1-7). Their vine had become as the vine of Sodom (Deut. 32: 32), although planted a noble vine (Jer. 2: 21). Israel had become an empty vine (Hos. 10: 1). Therefore, failing utterly to bear *fruit*, nothing but judgment was left for it.—S. R.

be used for any work? Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: As the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I [c]give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will [d]set my face against them: from the fire they have [e]gone out, but fire shall devour them; and ye shall [f]know that I am Jehovah when I set my face against them. And I will make the land a [g]desolation because they have wrought [h]unfaithfulness, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[c] *cf.* Jer 52. 13 with Jer. 2. 21. *cf.* Mic 3.12.
[d] Lev. 17. 10. Ps. 34. 16. Jer. 21. 10.
[e] *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 17. *cf.* Is. 24. 18 *cf.* Amos 5. 19. *cf.* Jer. 48. 44. *cf.* Amos 9. 1-4.
[f] ch. 6. 7, etc.
[g] ch. 6. 14; ch. 33. 29; Is. 24. 3-12. [h] *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 14-17.

to us as Christians, in which He declares Himself the true Vine, the stock of the vine for His people, from which all the sap and nourishment must come; in whom alone, therefore, all ability for fruit is found: "I am the Vine," says the Lord to His disciples: "ye are the branches." There is nothing strange, therefore, in the choice of this image for Jerusalem. In God's people is found at all times that weakness and impotence which belong to man, apart from Him who alone can be to them the source of supply—the all-sufficient Source. It is ours to recognize this feebleness and nothingness on our part; not merely such as is necessarily in the creature, but more, in the *ruined* creature; as hopelessly ruined as Israel in the picture here. To be connected with Israel, now cast out of the land, could be no cause of hope, apart from the grace of God which could alone fulfil to them those promises which in grace He had given, which He would fulfil, therefore—must fulfil—for His own sake, for He can neither change nor repent. Nevertheless, no individual in Israel could *claim* their fulfilment. God's grace itself was manifestly out of their reach, save only as in the confession of this helplessness faith turned to Him who, because of His own nature, could not turn away from the prayer of the destitute confiding in Him. Here is where we find our place and portion still, who have indeed no part in these promises which are to be fulfilled to Israel, but who enjoy, nevertheless, the sweet new covenant assurances in their fullest reality.

How blessed to know Christ as the unfailing resource of His people; from whom they have but to draw, as the branch from the vine, for unlimited capacity for fruitfulness! We are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus." What we want, therefore, is but the faith which claims and looks for the fulfilment of these blessings—the actual ministry of them for actual need. And of what use are we if we do not bear fruit? "In this," says the Lord, "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Sec. 3.

We have now the long and terrible history of Jerusalem as the Lord alone could give it; a people who, in so signal and manifest a way, had been delivered by the power of God from the misery of her original condition, as born among the nations, and made to know Himself. None, surely, had been brought face to face with Him as Israel had. And Jerusalem was only Israel in fullest manifestation; and not only delivered, but they had been united to God in a way no other nation had, to have their part with Him, and know the full blessedness of that in the midst of a world gone far from Him. They were thus (wonderful to speak of it) as it were Jehovah's married wife, to whom He was

SECTION 3 (Chap. xvi.).

Jerusalem's profanation of her marriage covenant, yet final restoration.

1 (1–5): Her original condition.

1. And the [i]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, [j]cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto Jerusalem:

[i] ch. 15. 1, etc. [j] ch. 20. 4. ch. 22. 2. *cf.* Ps. 78. 9, etc. *cf.* Ps. 106. 6, 7, etc.

in a relationship peculiar and exclusive amongst the nations, and enjoying all the blessings that this great and wonderful position would of necessity yield for them. Yet they were now to prove the terrible capacity on man's part of losing all that he is entrusted with, in breaking, as far as he can do it, every tie by which God would bind him to Himself.

The long story of this is given in all its loathsomeness, for it was no time to hide the reality of it all, so that it should be fully judged. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not find judgment from God; thus, for those who had hearts to realize it (and the spiritual eye is in the heart) Israel is taught here to judge herself, that grace may even now be her refuge; and, as at the beginning, so at the end, triumphant therefore all through, God's grace is manifest. If Israel has profaned her marriage covenant, yet God in the end shows Himself true to it: and from Him shall come the final restoration which shall at last openly, in the eyes of all the world, manifest His grace, so that the world itself should know it. This, then, is what we have here.

1. Israel's original condition is first reviewed. As already said, Jerusalem is only Israel in full development. The city stands for the people, as cities are everywhere the development of man, in which what he is is most fully shown and brought to maturity. The city in this way is notable from many sides. The tendency of men is plainly towards cities; they show what man is, what he can do for himself; as, on the other side, they show his feebleness, his dependence, and how little he can do. There was no city *of God* in the beginning. The first city that we read of was man's city, not God's. It was the offspring of man's thoughts and of his need. The city is the bringing together of men in the consciousness of their need of one another, according to the common motto that "Union is strength." Helplessness is written upon man in his very beginning. The human babe is helpless as the young of no other creature is. The child from its beginning and for long, is debtor to others if it is to exist at all; and for suitable development men must come together. God has so ordained that full independence should be impossible for us. Individuality with all of us is grounded in some way upon individual defect We are not competent all round. We have each his special capacities and his special deficiencies; as, in the world at large also, each country has its own peculiar productions and its need of what is to be got from elsewhere. Thus the world is bound together, and it is quite superfluous to-day to dwell upon the need which we thus have of one another.

The city then is the natural product of this need; but while it is almost necessarily thus the product of man's thought, there is in it a divine meaning which eternity itself will recognize in the fullest way. Yet man anticipated God as to it, and such an anticipation is ever found to be without God, and to have, therefore, all the terrible characteristics of this. Those who would not scatter, when that was God's mind, remained but to build up Babel. Yet man finds the help he seeks. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the

countenance of his friend." The bringing of men together favors this; and even the more diverse such men are, the more may this help be manifested—struck out, as one may say, even from the collision of contrasted attributes. Thus in the city we find, as a rule, the ripest fruits of man's efforts, and always, perhaps, his ripest wisdom, but in evil as well as good. And, alas, with man such as he is, selfish ends dominate too largely to make the coming together wholly good. Rather is there oftentimes, as we know, the most manifest and fullest debasement in this way. What spectacles are men's cities of vice and poverty, as, on the other hand, of man's achievements! Cain builds his city; and his posterity show the aptitudes which are developed in such combinations as the city manifests. But it is plain that morally the development is but a degeneration. On the other hand, in the final future, the city will manifest God's hand in it—God's hand in our individual necessities themselves; in our various adaptation to one another; in our various ability to help one another. Love is the spirit of help, and, where true, manifests the divine nature. How blessed to know that His own ministry of love to us all is to be reflected in our ways with one another. The city of God stands over against the city of man, contrasted, yet resembling. Jerusalem here gives us, in a sense, both sides of this—city of God, as in His thought and desire; city of man, as he but too surely makes it. Jerusalem, then, is but Israel herself in full development.

She is first told of her extraction and of her birth. Heredity puts its mark upon the pages of Scripture, as it does everywhere upon nature; only, man being fallen, the mark of heredity is largely the mark of the fall. Grace makes us to rise above this, but if the power of grace declines, the natural heredity manifests itself once more. Thus Jerusalem was, as it were, again Canaanite, as it was in its origin: "Thy father," says God, "was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite." Notice these names here, where everything has a symbolic force, and fully significant, therefore. At the very opening of the world after the flood, as a mark of departure from God already beginning, and so soon to spread everywhere in it, we find the shameful story of Ham ("darkened by the light," as his name imports), and Canaan is his immediate descendant; it shows us man, not in mere original ignorance of God, as many now would make him, but as one who, in the presence of the light received it only as capacity for degradation. Resisted light is ten-fold darkness. From such an one Canaan is the natural fruit, Canaan "the merchantman," as the word is plainly used in Scripture. Canaan is from *cana*, "to bend the knee, to bow down." "Servant of servants" he was to be to his brethren; and we may be sure that he was that in spirit, if God puts him into this place. But we may serve in two ways. We may serve in love, in which there is nothing higher. But, with fallen man, this service may be but as in Canaan the spirit of the slave (the "servant of servants"), the spirit of fear and not of love. Or it may be for selfish ends; when, of necessity, subtlety and deceit will characterize it. "He is a merchant" (*Canaan*), says the prophet, "the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loveth to oppress" (Hos. xii 7). Thus it is plain what the spirit of his service is. The Amorite comes naturally from this.

The Amorite, as we have seen elsewhere, does not mean "the mountaineer," for which there is no proper justification. He is "the talker," the man of words; in the East, in the market-place, he is the person who perhaps most impresses you. The merchant, there, is emphatically one who "cries up" his wares; demanding a higher price than he ever expects to get, in order to

Thine [k]extraction and thy birth is of the land of the Canaanite; thy [l]father was an Amorite and thy [m]mother a Hittite. And as for thy [n]nativity, in the day that thou wast born, thy [o]navel was not cut, neither wast thou [p]washed with water for cleansing;* thou wast

* Or, "for looking upon;" so Gesenius.

k ch. 21. 30. *cf.* Neh. 9. 7. with Is. 51. 1, 2. *cf.* Eph. 2. 3. *cf.* Deut. 26. 5.
l *cf.* Deut. 20. 17. *cf.* Rom. 5. 12. m *cf.* Ezra 9. 1; *cf.* Ps. 51. 5. n *cf.* Ex. 1. 7-14; *cf.* Ex. 2. 3-6; *cf.* Acts 7. 18, 19; *cf.* Hos. 2 3. o *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18; *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 1. p *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 9; *cf.* Ex. 19. 10.

leave room for the inevitable coming down. He knows the uttermost value of his goods; or if he is buying, how to depreciate that which he really values. The wise man exactly describes him: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (Prov. xx. 14). With greed against greed, the balances are sure to be deceitful ones; and for him who is possessed with a spirit of this sort, everything is valued according to its estimate in the market. Alas for "the Canaanite in the house of the Lord!" (Zech. xiv. 21). Here the Judas-spirit develops, who will sell his Master cheap enough; and we see directly the proofs of Israel's parentage in this way, how the Amorite father manifests itself in her.*

Her mother also as the Hittite is not difficult to understand. The sons of Heth are literally "the children of fear" (See Gen. xxiii. 19, *Notes*). Such fear necessarily develops where the heart is set upon its own things, and in a world where every one is at strife with his neighbor. In the things of God also it comes in, as we know, in such sort that men tell us to-day that all religion is bred of it. This, moreover, can alternate with utter recklessness; for such a spirit will naturally seek the antidotes for its torment, which the world and Satan will as readily supply. All this, alas, but too well depicts the history of the professing people of God, whether in Israel or in the Christendom that has succeeded it. If we would get the profit of all this, we must not lose sight of the unmistakable repetition before our eyes to-day of Israel's history. We have it all, even to the Babylonish captivity, and the broken fragments which have come out of it. Go back to the so-called "dark ages," or find the spots in in which these dark ages have survived to the present day, and see how a selfish spirit of fear is everywhere, and how it connects with the haughtiness of a spiritual profession which knows how to cry up its wares, while it will sell them cheap, too, to attract sufficiently the bidder. The Amorite and the Hittite have left unmistakably their impress upon things everywhere; and we have little cause to boast ourselves with the Philistine boast (see ver. 27) against scattered and exiled Israel. Yet we cannot but notice in Jacob, the supplanter, how these features showed themselves in the very beginning of the nation—before there was a nation at all. But this is all that heredity can do for us. For the rest, it must be the grace of God or nothing.

We come now (ver. 4) to the actual birth of the nation which, as we know, was in Egypt. The forlornness of their condition was manifest when, according to the figurative language here, their navel was not cut; that is to say, they

*The Amorites, or "Talkers," suggest that pride which is so distinctive of high profession—"speaking great swelling words;"—"Our lips are our own, who is lord over us." Pride and boasting seem thus to be connected with the thought of the Amorite, the *emir* (as the word is) who exalts himself, and gives his commands. The Hittite is the other extreme—cringing, fawning cowardice. They are linked together as the parentage of the natural man. "Ye shall be as God" is the Amorite pride; "they hid themselves" is the Hittite cowardice.—S. R.

not rubbed with [q]salt at all, nor [r]wrapped in swaddling bands at all. No eye had [s]pity on thee to do any of these things for thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast [t]cast out in the open field, so [u]abhorred was thy person in the day that thou wast born.

2 (6-8): Her deliverence and Jehovah's love.

2. And I [v]passed by thee, and saw thee [w]weltering in thy blood, and I said unto thee in thy blood, [x]Live! Yea, I said unto thee in thy blood, Live! I caused thee to [y]multiply* as the sprout of the field; and thou didst increase and grow [z]great, and camest to [a]excellent

* Or, "made thee myriads."

cf. Lk. 10. 33; *cf.* Lk. 18. 37. *w cf.* Eph. 2. 1. *x cf.* Eph 2. 5; *cf.* Col. 2. 13. *y cf.* Ex. 12. 37; *cf.* Gen. 22. 17. *z cf.* Deut. 4. 32-34; *cf.* Gen. 18. 18; *cf.* Deut. 26. 5. *a cf.* Ex. 3. 22; *cf.* Deut. 4. 8; *cf.* Deut. 32. 10-14; *cf.* Ps. 135. 4.

q cf. Lev. 2. 13. *r cf.* Lk. 2. 7, 12. *s cf.* Is. 49 15. *cf.* Lam 2. 11, 19 *cf.* Lam 4. 3, 10. *t cf.* Gen. 21. 10. *cf.* Jer 9 21, 22. *cf.* Deut. 32. 10. *u cf.* Is 14.19. *cf.* Mic 7.10. *v cf.* Ex 2.24, 25

were not qualified, as it might seem, for independent life at all, and thus exposed to death at the very outset.* Nor were they washed with water for cleansing. How they had forgotten the very name of their God in Egypt is manifest by Moses' inquiry (Ex. iii. 13); and the golden calf is manifest proof of how the Egyptian idolatry had laid hold of them. Thus they were not rubbed with salt at all; they were strangers to divine holiness and to that power which alone can resist corruption. Nor, as yet, were there even swaddling-bands for the infant nation. The restraints suited to their condition which love itself may impose, and which they were to find afterwards, were, as yet, unfelt. Egypt had lawlessness enough for them, if it had no true freedom. And Israel was, as we know, no object of compassion even to the nation among whom they had come to be. They were but as a foundling cast out into the open field to perish; as we may see them in Moses their deliverer himself thus cast out, but with the divine hand over him, and a divine purpose in all, through which these very circumstances became the means of lifting him into his higher and God-ordained position.

2. It is evident, then, in what we find here, it is not the city Jerusalem merely or literally that we are to think of, but the nation as we find them in Egypt when under the decree of the persecutor, in their blood, as it is expressed here, and groaning in their bondage, "God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them" (Ex. ii. 25). The first sign of their national life and of the blessing of God was even then manifesting itself with regard to them in their multiplication under the very decree of death; and when afterwards the judgments were upon Egypt, Israel, as we read, grew great and came to excellent adornment. It was indeed the voice of the Almighty that had said unto them in their blood, "Live." And, according to the figure, the breasts that were to nourish her children grew; while even then, nevertheless, they were, as far as the blessing which God designed for them, still "naked and bare." But then and thus it was that He looked upon them; and for this despised people, mere Egyptian bond-slaves as they were, there came the time of love in which, as He declares, He spread His skirt over them to cover their nakedness. We cannot but think of the covering cloud, and how, when they seemed to be exposed to the wrath of their enemies and almost in their grasp,

* The necessary separation from defilements of birth is here suggested. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The link with its symbolic Hittite mother had not been cut. The picture is dreadful and solemn, but divinely applicable to Israel's infancy as a nation.—S. R.

adornment;* thy breasts were fashioned and thy hair grew: yet thou wast [b]naked and bare. And I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, and behold, thy time was the [c]time of love; and I spread my [d]skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; and I [e]sware unto thee, and entered into [f]covenant with thee, saith the Lord Jehovah, and thou becamest [g]mine.

* Lit., "Adornment of adornments."

b *cf.* Hos. 2. 3.
c *cf.* Jer. 2. 2. *cf.* Rev. 2. 4.
d *cf.* Ruth 3. 9.
e *cf.* ch. 20. 5, 6. *ctr.* Heb. 7. 20-22.
f *cf.* Ex. 19. 4-8. *cf.* Ex. 24. 1-8. *ctr.* Hos. 2. 18-20.
g *cf.* Ex. 33. 16; *cf.* Is. 43. 1.

the sea made way for them, while the cloud covered them from above. Here, already, they were proclaimed the people of the Lord, although the covenant at Sinai had not yet taken place; and, indeed, it is important to realize that *this* covenant was not, after all, the foundation of blessing for the nation. God had His own purpose in it, and His purposes are always blessing.*

The law was needed as the handmaid of a grace for which the people as yet, alas, were not prepared; and when God looked upon them in Egypt, it is expressly declared that He remembered His "covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob," and thus "took knowledge of them." In the same way, at the bush, God declares Himself to Moses as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and His word is: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt" (Ex. iii. 7). His message to Pharaoh accordingly is: "Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, my first-born; and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve Me." Thus God's recognition of His people does not wait for any legal promise on their part of what *they* will do: and when at Sinai the legal covenant begins, He could already say to them (Ex. xix. 4): "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself." True, He has now to say: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. xix. 5, 6). Thus there was a covenant which they had to keep or observe, but that which followed was not what is yet in the divine mind for them, of which the new covenant is to be the perfect expression. Nor are we to confound, as alas so many Christians even still do, the old with the new covenant. It was of their own choice and with the declaration of their own ability—the value of which had so soon to be tested, but with such terrible result—that God proclaimed in their hearing from the mount which flamed with fire and quaked under His presence there, the terms of blessing which they might find in an obedience which was rendered as easy as possible for them, but which, nevertheless, was the "ministration of death."

Hittite they are in their own character surely, as they tremble and stand afar

* This period is touchingly referred to in Jeremiah, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness . . . Israel was holiness unto the Lord" (Jer. 2: 2, 3). The whole chapter is a solemn and tender pleading with a poor unfaithful people, like an untrue wife; and this is followed up in the next chapter: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you" (chap. 3: 14). Similarly Isaiah (chap. 50) shows that it was not the Lord, but Israel's sins which had brought about her divorce. This is the frequent imagery of Scripture in history (as Gen. 29: 18), psalm (45) and prophecy. In a higher and sweeter sense it is also the type of the union of Christ with the Church (Eph. 5: 32, etc.). The two are not however to be confounded.—S. R.

3 (9-14): Her conferred glory.

3. And I [h]washed thee with water, yea, I thoroughly washed thy blood from off thee, and I [i]anointed thee with oil. And I [j]clothed thee with broidered work, and shod thee with [k]seal-skin, and bound thee about with fine [l]linen and covered thee with [m]silk. And I

h Ex. 19. 10. *cf.* Ps. 51. 7. *i cf.* Ex. 13. 21, 22. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 21. *j cf.* Ex. 19. 4 6.

cf. Ps. 45. 13, 14 *k cf.* Ex. 25. 5; Ex. 26. 14; *cf.* Deut. 33. 25. *l cf.* Ex. 39. 27-29 with Ex. 19. 6; *cf.* Gen. 41. 42; *cf.* Prov. 31. 22. *m cf.* Rev. 18. 12.

off while Moses draws near to the thick darkness in which God is (Ex. xx. 18–21); and Amorite none the less for that, as we see in their ready profession. But thus it was that they had to be tested, as Moses declares: "God is come to prove you," he says. But alas for the fallen creature under the proving of God! What can it prove but a fallen condition? And Moses' song long after this (Deut. xxxii.), a song which was to be put into their mouths that it might be a witness for God against the children of Israel (Deut. xxxi. 19), declares at once the utter hopelessness of blessing under it, and the grace of God which must be their only resource at last. Nevertheless, Israel was here now by their own profession in covenant with the Lord; they had fully, of course, the responsibility of this.

3. The object here is manifestly to recite all that God did for them, and in spite of legal conditions, how God's grace as well as His holiness was made to shine out. "I washed thee with water," He says, "yea, I thoroughly washed thy blood from off thee, and I anointed thee with oil." Hengstenberg asserts here that "We are not to think of spiritual benefits;" and that "the prophet abides by what is palpable, which the ungodly even, whose consciences he wishes to touch, would necessarily recognize." How narrow is this as an idea, and how little it does justice to what God was doing for His people, in which the spiritual benefits were, as one may say, the whole thing aimed at—without which all others would be necessarily empty and vain; true also, as has just been acknowledged, that the people under the test of the law, would necessarily show themselves what man under such tests has ever shown himself to be, and that, notwithstanding the large outward show of blessing in keeping the Lord's words, which should have enticed nature itself, if possible, into obedience. They were to have all possible assistances to this, and self-interest itself was to be enlisted upon the same side. Every material good was to be with the righteous; the whole nation, under one government, committed to the same path, was to be in favor of him who kept the covenant. Nevertheless, He who knew man perfectly—who knew the needs of the true-hearted who would experience that by the law is the knowledge of sin—could not but speak all through of God's continual mercy and the ground of His showing this. The very publication of commandments in the keeping of which, if it were possible, man should live, was a light which must needs have effect upon the nation at large. Moreover, they had all the responsibility of the knowledge which God had given them of Himself in the constant interventions in their behalf, providing for them through the barren sands of the wilderness every day of their journey—a constant miracle. Thus He could say of them, in contrast with the terrible immoralities of the nations around: "I washed thee with water;" and in the provisions of His law itself, when seen in connection with their typical meaning: "I thoroughly washed thy blood from off thee, and I anointed thee with oil."

As to what these last words signify in their deepest meaning, we cannot but see ground for it in the gifts and work of the Spirit manifesting Himself among

them, the responsibility of which was upon all. From those who have heart for the blessing, nothing can shut out blessing. Nothing on God's part surely would ever do it. And the oracles of God, which, as we must remember, began to take written form with Moses himself, were as the voice of the Spirit; the apostle Paul puts them as Israel's chiefest blessing: "Chiefly that unto them were committed the oracles of God." How much are we not receiving at this present time through God's word to them! Here, then, God puts before the nation, in its extreme departure from Him, all that in which He had wrought to bring them nigh.*

The clothing with "broidered work" (literally, "variegated work") naturally refers to the elaborate ceremonial of their religion; in which, although under a veil, all the grace of God was found for them, as far as it could then have expression. What an interweaving of forms and colors do we find there when we consider its typical significance—continually inviting the meditation of the thoughtful; and for those who, stricken in conscience by the law's just claim upon them, how it pointed them to God's way of forgiveness! We may see in the 32nd psalm how far this knowledge could go, while here the very failure of the law to produce perfection made it all the more a finger pointing to that which was yet to come. The inefficiency of those sacrifices, such as those of bulls and goats, would necessarily press itself upon any who realized what sin was; while faith, in connection with prophecies given from the very beginning, would find in it the foretoken of a better Sacrifice to come. On the other hand, when positive, wilful sin was in question, the ceremonies failed altogether, and one in sin like David's was left entirely to God's mercy, as he also expresses it in the 51st psalm. In all this Israel was plainly under the school-master, and the law was already the handmaid of the grace upon which everything depends for man.

The shoeing with sealskin, which is next spoken of, makes us think of Kohath's charge in the wilderness, to whom the most precious things, as the object-lessons for approach to God, were committed—all went under the protection of sealskin. Israel was thus, in a higher sense than the literal, shod for the way. She must pursue her journey in peace: and so are we, as the apostle tells us, "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;" shoes which, like those of Israel in the wilderness, never wear out.

The "fine linen" speaks of practical righteousness, inscribed as it was upon the tables of the covenant. The clothing of the priests, and the enclosure of the tabernacle itself, was of fine linen; to a thoughtful mind it could hardly fail to suggest something of what it typified. It comes also in its natural place in the enumeration here, after cleansing by the blood and the maintenance of approach to God had been duly cared for—things upon which all righteousness depends.

The word used here for "silk" only occurs twice in Scripture. It speaks of something drawn out (*meshi*, from *mashah*); it is an animal product, as the fine

* The anointing with oil was an official act in setting apart priests, kings, and in one case at least, the prophet to his work. As a type of the Spirit, it would suggest the empowering of the anointed one for his work. Thus Israel as a nation had that ministry of the Spirit which should have been an abundant sufficiency for all her testimony and service. That she so utterly failed was but proof of her alienation, not of any lack in God's provision. The simile of the marriage relation is still preserved here. The presentation of queen Esther to Ahasuerus will illustrate this. For the Church however the unction is of the *indwelling* Spirit, and therefore abides eternally.—S. R.

decked thee with [n]ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands and a chain about thy neck; and I put a ring upon thy nose and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful [o]crown upon thy head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy clothing was fine linen, and silk and broidered work; thou didst

n cf. Gen. 24. 22, 47, 53 with Ex. 33. 4. *cf.* Prov. 1. 9. *cf.* Prov. 4. 9.
o cf. Is. 28. 5. *cf.* Lam. 5. 16.

linen is a vegetable one. All nature contributes to the symbolism of spiritual things, and none can question that Israel's was a symbolic system throughout. Silk is produced by the caterpillar, according to the figurative idea, through death to resurrection; left behind, as it were, by the creature for the use of man. We thus see in it the most costly ornament of God's people still—in fact, the "best robe" for the Father's house.

This introduces to what is more simply *ornament*, for God is not satisfied with meeting the necessities of His people, but must enrich those whom He has delivered. Hands, neck, nose, ears, head, are all covered with them. The bracelet (*tsamid*) speaks of what is "joined together," and *tsemed* means a "yoke;" thus are the hands still ornamented that are used to labor in the service of Christ. The chain for the neck (*rabhid*, "collar for the throat") reminds us of that through which the high praises of God should sound, as expressed in psalm 149. In both of these last things the activities of the divine life are pointed out as the true ornament of God's people. The nose-ring seems to give us the effect for the whole life here: *nezem al appaim* means literally "the device for the nostrils," which in Scripture are connected with the human life which is as a vapor in the poor, weak creature which man is; but by God's "device," the wonderful plan which these things bring before us, the life is redeemed from vanity. It seems that we are here reminded of all this.

Then we have the ear-rings in the ear. The word *agil* is in close relation with the name *Eglon* (see Josh. x. 3, *Notes*), which means not simply a "ring," but with the thought of movement also, reminding us of what Ezekiel has ever in remembrance, the whirring wheels, the wheel of life ordained at once for man's humiliation and his blessing. These two things come constantly together, and the ear is truly circumcised when it accepts the divine lesson. "The ear that heareth the reproof of life shall abide among the wise" (Prov. xv. 31). Thus the ear is indeed beautified and capable of hearing aright all other things when it has heard, first of all, the condemnation upon man himself, which, accepted, brings him ever to the never-failing blessing which God has for him.*

After all this comes the beautiful crown. A people of whom the former things were true could not lack it. Israel, when true to her God, could not but be thus a queen among the nations. If she failed, the cause of the failure is manifest. For when God was even in measure owned in the midst of Israel, she stood unconquerable by all enemies. Thus the next words picture her according to her God-given exaltation. As we see her in Solomon's time, she has indeed "come to royal estate." The Lord sums up what He has done for them: "Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy clothing was fine linen and silk and broidered work." And to this is added that by which God sustains the creature so dependent upon Him: "Thou didst eat fine flour and honey and

* How beautifully all these adornments speak of the Lord our righteousness. Each detail yields a fuller richer meaning for us than even it could do for Israel, for all is *real*, spiritual, and therefore eternal.—S. R.

eat fine [p]flour, and [q]honey, and [r]oil; and thou becamest [s]exceeding beautiful and didst prosper unto [t]royal estate. And thy [u]fame went forth among the nations for thy beauty; for it was perfect through [v]my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord Jehovah.

p *cf.* Deut. 32. 13, 14. *cf.* Ps. 81. 16.
q *cf.* Ex. 3. 17.
r *cf.* Deut. 33. 24. *cf.* Deut. 8. 8
s *cf.* Ps. 48. 2. *cf.* Ps. 50. 2. *cf.* Lam. 2. 15.
t *cf.* Gen. 17. 6; *cf.* 2 Sam. 8. 15. u *cf.* Deut. 4. 6-8, 32-38; *cf.* Josh. 2. 9. v *cf.* Ps. 90. 17; *cf.* Song 1. 5 with Song 4. 7.

oil." Even in the wilderness, the bread from heaven was given them; not only angels' food, as the common version puts it, but "the food of the mighty" (Ps. lxxviii. 25)—the food which makes mighty. How apt we are to think that if we are once Christians, the character of our food is of no vital import. How little is realized our dependence upon the word of God—that "man shall live not by bread alone," but by that which is its true antitype, "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!" If only we knew better our dependence upon this, if only God's word was searched into, not to obtain mere knowledge, but that which ministers to the need of the soul (and there is nothing in all God's word that does not minister to it if read aright), what mighty men would be produced! Is it not for want of this that revivals, such as are truly that, so soon decline? Through the grace of God, some ministry has laid hold upon men, some fresh truth, it may be, or some fresh power in truth known before; but then, so often comes the lack in *going on* acquiring and growing. God has invited, has drawn to Himself, and is ready to give in unexhausted grace what would maintain the spiritual life in blessing and power. But we are satisfied, as it were, with the first taste, and go no further. Thus, as the manna, kept and unused, quickly grew old and became corrupt, so the truth once enjoyed, even if not lost, becomes, as it were, without sap or lifeless, inadequate to produce what once it did produce. And why? It has been neglected, if not slighted. It has not led, as it should, to God Himself and to the growing acquaintance with Him for which it was intended. The glow and fervor that once was, passes away therefore; and we are brought under that law which we have seen again and again so to characterize that which is earthly—of revival and decay. The unsearched pages of God's word are witness against us of how we have really dishonored that which we have professed to believe in as, all of it, the word of God. If we are content with this, decay is assured.

Again, we read of the manna that it was like wafers made with honey (Ex. xvi. 31). Honey speaks of natural sweetness, which may refresh one for the moment, as in Jonathan's case, but which we can in no wise live upon. But the manna, the heavenly food, has in it a power which does not pall; not mere natural sweetness, but that which is abiding. In Christ, the true antitype of the manna, our true food, we find indeed all the sweetness of humanity, but raised to the divine. Such honey of spiritual sweetness awakens an appetite which should never languish.

But again, we find in the manna (Num. xi. 8) that the taste of it was like "fresh oil." So the power of the Spirit is in the word of God; it is *Christ* whom it ministers to us; and in this there is perpetual freshness, which will resist decay. Thus even in the wilderness we already have that which will be our food in the land itself—the meat which, as the Lord says, "endureth to everlasting life."

This is the application for ourselves, of course. The things that happened

4 (15-34): Her failure to abide.

4. But thou didst [w]trust in thy beauty, and [z]playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy harlotry upon every passer-by: his it was. And thou didst take of thy [garments] and madest for thyself [y]high places, decked with divers colors, and didst play the harlot thereon: [the like] had [z]not been, and shall be no more. And thou didst take thy beautiful

cf. Jer. 2. 20; *cf.* Hos. 1. 2; *cf.* Hos. 4. 10. *y cf.* 1 Ki. 3. 2; *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 43, etc. 25, 26; *cf.* 2 Chr. 33. 9.

w cf. Deut. 32. 15. *cf.* Mic. 3. 11 *cf.* Zeph. 3. 11. *x cf.* Ex. 32. 6. *cf.* Num. 25. 1 2. *cf.* Judg. 3. 6. *cf.* Ps 106. 35. *cf.* Is. 1. 21. *cf.* Is. 57. 8. *z cf.* 1 Ki. 21.

unto Israel "happened unto them for types;" yet in all this we surely can see how God was drawing His people to Himself; how He would make, and did make, day by day bear witness to His inexhaustible resources, and lead His people on from strength to strength, making their difficulties only the more to manifest the almighty power which was there to meet them. Thus Israel became "exceeding beautiful," even in the eyes of the nations around, as we see in the gifts of Tyre and Sheba in the days of Solomon—an anticipation of the time yet to come in which again, drawn by the glory of her glorious King, "the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift." "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him" (Ps. xlv. 12; lxxii. 10, 11). But Israel forgot that it was the comeliness which Jehovah's presence imparted to them which constituted her beauty. Hence the misery which soon followed, and which not yet has passed away.

4. The story of Israel's failure is next brought out; and, alas, all her privilege, her wealth of blessing, became for her only the means of more fatal and deeper downfall. It is traced to its root here, to their self-confidence. Alas, how possible it is for those who owe all they have to grace alone, that self-confidence should yet show itself! And *we* may build ourselves up just as Israel did, upon privileges which only God's grace could have given to us, thus taking the glory which is His due to dress ourselves with it! And how quickly pride may thus darken the sunshine of God's grace—for God dwelleth with the humble and the contrite spirit, and the proud He beholdeth afar off: it is the necessity of His nature. Sin entered at the very outset of man's history, by departure from the God-appointed place, as it began in heaven itself. The account of this is given us later on, where we shall have to consider it: "Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (chap. xxviii. 17). So with Israel: "Thou didst trust in thy beauty," and then, alas, the Canaanite character came fully out. Israel could make merchandise of that beauty itself, and, in the strong language of Scripture (to make it offensive to us, as it was to God), she played the harlot because of her renown, prostituting herself with the nations around in utter debasement. What cause had she indeed to whom all God's wealth was being ministered, to make merchandise of it with others? Alas, where pride turns the thoughts upon oneself, God's gifts fail to satisfy. So with Israel; and so with us, wherever in any measure we repeat this history. All that we see here in Israel is in principle only too sadly possible for the Christian also. Ezekiel has thus a message for us to-day. The heart that loses its first love becomes unsatisfied with its God-given blessings; the good that is in them is not found, and a mad craving comes into the soul to seek from the world a satisfaction

jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest for thee [a]images of men *and didst play the harlot with them. And thou didst take thy broidered garments, and didst cover them; and thou didst set [b]mine oil and mine incense before them. And my bread which I had given thee, fine flour, the oil and the honey with which I had fed thee, thou didst even set it before them for a sweet savor: so it was, saith the Lord Jehovah. And thou didst take

[a] *cf.* Jer. 2. 27, 28. *cf.* Rom. 1. 23.

[b] *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 12–17. *cf.* Num. 28. 2.

* Lit., "male."

which the world has not, and therefore cannot give. Thus it finds but degradation, and this is what God calls idolatry and harlotry—singularly strong words, we may think, but only because the true estimate of things is lost. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses;" says James, "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" And again another apostle says, "Covetousness, which is idolatry." The Church taking up with the world has repeated, only in a more terrible way, Israel's history; and we must not forget this, so as to make the prophetic words but mere records of the past, and lose their admonition for us.

Departure from God took its outward form in Israel by making for themselves "high places." It was but a heathen habit, playing upon the imagination with a worship in which there is no heart, just as men still seek to satisfy themselves with music, architecture, drapery, and that most characteristic "dim religious light," in which to worship a God who is Light itself, and in whom no darkness is. Such things work upon nature, and produce a sentiment which is so largely taken for the reality which is wanting to it. Thus upon the mountain-tops man could imagine himself nearer to God than in the valleys, and the depths of groves and forests helped, with the beauty of nature, to make him think he was nearer to the God of nature than he really was. There is indeed a witness to God in all these things: who would wish to deny it? Nay, with joy to realize how God in all these things is seeking to draw near to man. Nevertheless, it is just here that man so often makes the fatal mistake of substituting what is merely natural for what is spiritual, and so deceives himself. In heathenism these high places and these groves turned thus, as was inevitable, to evil instead of good, and the worst abominations of heathenism attached themselves to them. What is figurative in the language used here is nevertheless drawn from the awful grossness of the heathen abominations, in which the lusts and passions of men were let loose as homage to the God of nature, with the consequent degradation following upon this. Israel soon realized all these abominations, and spent the riches which God had heaped upon her to the gratification of those various forms of lust which make the world the corrupt thing it always has been.

Under such figures as we find here, the Spirit of God in the final book, in Revelation, draws the awful picture of Babylon the Great, the corrupt Church, in her commerce with the kings of the earth. She has gone Israel's way, but further in reality than Israel could go, for holy things were committed to her such as Israel never had, and with these she has made merchandise in true Canaanite fashion. She has given that which is holy to the dogs; she has cast her pearls before swine; and she, too, out of her silver and gold, has made for herself

thy [c]sons and thy daughters, whom thou hadst borne unto me, and thou didst sacrifice them unto them to be devoured. Were thy whoredoms a small matter that thou didst slay my children and give them up in passing* them over to them? And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou didst not [d]remember the days of thy youth when thou wast naked and bare, when thou wast weltering† in thy blood.

And it came to pass after all thy wickedness ([e]woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord Jehovah), that thou didst build thee an eminent place, and madest thee a high place in every street: thou didst build thy high place at [f]every head of the way and madest thy beauty to be abhorred, and didst open thy feet to every one who passed by and multipliedst thy harlotry. And thou didst commit fornication with the [g]Egyptians, thy neighbors, great of flesh: and didst multiply thy harlotry to [h]provoke me to anger. And behold, I

c *cf.* 2 Ki. 16. 3. Ps. 106. 37, 38. *cf.* Is. 57. 5.

d *cf.* Jer. 2. 2. *cf.* Hos. 11. 1. *cf.* Gen. 35. 1. *cf.* Rev. 2. 4, 5.

e ch. 2. 10. Jer. 13. 27. *cf.* Mt. 23. 13-29.

f ver. 31. *cf.* Prov. 9. 14-18. *cf.* Is. 57. 5, 7. ch. 23. 9, 10.

g *cf.* Is 30. 2. *cf.* Is. 31. 3. *cf.* Lam. 5. 6.

h Deut. 31. 20. Jer. 11. 17.

* Or, "passing them through [the fire]." † Or, "trampled."

what is spoken of immediately here, the "image of men"—men not as they are, but as she would have them: in effect, sacramental, sham Christians, decorated with the lowest debasement of spiritual blessings. But wherever the heart departs from God, it will adorn what it seeks with imaginations of its own, and conjure up delirious visions, which only show the loss of all sobriety. The false becomes the true, and the true therefore becomes the false.

The last step here is one in which the apostate Church has still followed the ancient order. The children really born to God in the midst of Israel, the remnant owned as His, were sacrificed by a people mad upon their idols; and who knows not that, for refusing divine homage to a piece of magically transformed bread, the blood of God's saints has been poured out like water? If we had eyes to read such things on a minuter scale, how often might we find that the impulses and purposes born of the Spirit within us have been sacrificed in like manner to the self-will that even in a Christian may go thus after its idols. In all this, as with Israel, God's grace and the deliverance wrought by His grace must be practically forgotten. The way is naturally downward, and Israel leaving her true God transgressed as the heathen with their false ones would be ashamed to do. "Hath a nation changed its gods which are yet no gods?" asked the Lord by Jeremiah; "but my people have changed their glory into that which doth not profit" (Jer. ii. 11). The Philistines who at Ashdod would not tread upon the threshold of their mutilated Dagon (1 Sam. v. 5), might be ashamed of Israel's lewd way. They recognized the hand of the Lord upon them, when they sent back the ark to Israelitish territory; yet how little did Israel recognize or repent under the divine hand which was upon her! "Why," asks the Lord by Isaiah, "should ye be smitten any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint" (Isa. i. 5). But as in a Christian assembly, even in the apostles' days, there had been what even the Gentiles stigmatized as infamous, so Israel away from God became more heathenish than the heathen. Her high places were, as the Lord reproaches her here, at every cross-road, to allure passers-by from all

stretched out my hand over thee, and I [h]diminished thine allotted portion; and I [i]gave thee over to [k]the soul of them that hate thee, the daughters of the [k]Philistines who were ashamed of thy lewd way. And thou didst commit fornication with the [l]Assyrians because thou wast insatiable; yea, thou playedst the harlot with them and yet couldst [m]not be satisfied. And thou didst multiply thy harlotry with the land of merchants,* [n]Chaldea, and yet thou wast not satisfied therewith. How [o]weak is thy heart, saith the Lord Jehovah, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of a lewd, [p]imperious woman, in that thou buildedst thine eminent place at the head of every way, and madest thy high place in every street, and wast not like the harlot in that thou scornedst [q]reward! O [r]adulterous wife, that taketh strangers instead of her husband! They give rewards to all harlots, but [s]thou gavest thy rewards to all thy lovers, and rewardedst them that they might come unto thee on every side for thy whoredoms. And in thee is the [t]contrary from [other] women in thy whoredoms, in that none followeth thee to commit fornication, and whereas thou gavest reward, and no reward is given unto thee; so art thou contrary.

* Or, "Canaan."

h cf. Deut. 28. 48-57. *cf.* Is. 3. 1. *cf.* Jer. 37. 21.
i cf. Ps. 106. 41. *cf.* Jer. 34. 21.
k ver. 57. *cf.* 2 Chr. 28, 18, 19. *cf.* Is. 9. 12.
l ch. 23. 5-9. *cf.* 2 Chr. 28. 20 23. *cf.* Jer. 2. 18, 36.
m cf. Amos 4. 8 with Eph. 4. 19. *cf.* Prov. 30. 15.
n ch. 23. 14-17. *cf.* 2 Ki. 21. 9.
o cf. Prov. 9. 13. *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 5. *cf.* Hos. 6. 4.
p cf. Prov. 7. 11-13, etc. *cf.* Judg. 16. 15, 16. *cf.* Lam. 4. 1.
q vers. 33, 34. *cf.* Is. 52. 3.
r cf. Jer. 2. 25-28. ch. 23. 27.
s cf. Is. 30. 3, 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 57. 9; *cfr.* Jno. 6. 68.
t cf. Jer. 2. 11 with Mic. 4. 5; *cf.* Hos. 8. 9, 10.

quarters. As Rome in her days of degeneracy, so had Israel her Pantheon of all the gods there were round about her—of Egypt, with the fleshly grossness indicated in the worship of bestial gods; of Assyria, of Babylon, etc., all sought after, with continually increasing loss of prestige and power. The infatuated harlot squandered in vain all that divine goodness had bestowed upon her, hiring lovers for reward, getting herself none, and her portion from her true Husband necessarily finding no replenishment. If godliness hath profit of this life also, as well as that which is to come, how sure and utter is the loss that is entailed by the will that wanders from the Source of every good!

The record of Israel here is what we find in the history of Christendom as well, as already said, which has repeated the sins of her ancestry, even though there may be with this the disguise of a new dialect which puts no restraint upon the things thus covered up by it, the darkness only favoring the deeds that suit it.*

* It may be well to remember that this apostasy may have had, ostensibly, its origin in a *political* effort to court the friendship of the nations by whom Israel was surrounded. Isolated from all other peoples, Israel's only safety lay in abiding obedience to Jehovah. Lapsing from that she turned for help to one and another of the nations. Only faith would keep them true to God; this is abundantly seen in the book of Deuteronomy. Therefore when that faith failed, the people soon courted the favor of the world, and this of course led them into the idolatry described with such unsparing faithfulness in this portion.

So in the history of the Church, when first love failed—as in Ephesus—in the very effort to escape persecution—of Smyrna—the world was courted, and the illicit union of Pergamos and Thyatira was the inevitable result. Of course true faith resisted all this; but, alas, all men have not faith, and so the mass turn to the world for its help.

Similarly in the soul's individual history, faith alone fights the good fight; where faith

5 (35 52): The recompense of God.

5. Therefore, O [u] harlot, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thy money hath been poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy fornications with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thine abominations, and because of the blood of thy children which thou didst give unto them, therefore, behold, I will [v] gather all thy lovers with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all that thou hast loved, with all that thou hast hated—I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will [w] judge thee with the judgments of women that commit adultery and shed blood; and I will give thee up to the blood of [x] wrath and jealousy. I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall [y] throw down thine eminent place, and break down thy high places; and they shall strip thee of thy garments, and take thy fair jewels, and [z] leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up an assemblage against thee, and shall [a] stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall [b] burn thy houses with fire and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women; and I will cause thee to [c] cease from being a harlot, and thou shalt also give no more any reward. And I will [d] appease my wrath against thee, and my jealousy shall [e] depart from thee; and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. Because thou hast not [f] remembered the days of thy youth, but hast raged against me in all these things, therefore, behold, I also will [g] bring thy way upon thy head, saith the Lord Jehovah, and thou shalt not commit this lewdness besides all thine abominations.

Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the [h] mother, so is her daughter! Thou art the daughter of thy mother that loathed her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters who loathed their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite, and your father an [i] Amorite. And thine elder sister is [j] Samaria that dwelleth at thy left hand, she and her daughters; and thy younger sister that dwelleth at thy right hand is [k] Sodom and her daughters. And

u *cf.* Is. 1. 21. *cf.* Jer. 3. 1.
v *cf.* Jer. 13. 22, 26. ch. 23. 9, 10, 22-30. *cf.* Nah. 3. 5, 6. *cf.* Rev. 2. 22.
w *cf.* Lev. 20. 10. ch. 23. 45. *cf.* Jno. 8. 3-11.
x *cf.* Ps. 79. 3-5. *cf.* Jer. 18. 21. *cf.* Zeph. 1. 17.
y vers. 24, 31. ch. 7. 22-24. Is. 27. 9. *cf.* 1 Ki. 13. 2.
z ch. 23. 26, 29. *cf.* Is. 3. 16-24.
a *cf.* Jno. 8. 5, 7. *cf.* Hab. 1. 6-10. ch. 23. 10, 47.
b Deut. 13. 16. 2 Ki. 25. 9. Jer. 39. 8. Mic. 3. 12.
c ch. 23. 27. *cf.* ch. 37. 23. *cf.* Zech. 13. 2.
d ch. 5. 13. *cf.* Is. 1. 24.
e *cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 54. 9, 10.
f ver. 22. Ps. 106. 13.
g ch. 7. 3, 4, 8, 9. ch. 22. 31.
h vers. 3, 45. *cf.* ch. 18. 2.
i *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 26.
j ver. 51. ch. 23. 4.
k vers. 48, etc. *cf.* Is. 1. 9, 10. *cf.* Jer. 23. 14.

5. Israel's guilt is now summed up and her punishment announced. Her sins are made the means of her recompense, and those to whom she has turned, while turning away from God, become the instruments of His judgments. Stripped of the riches she had received from God, but had lavished upon her

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weakens, the power of spiritual enemies increases, and in very timidity the soul turns to the world and its principles for the strength which comes from God alone. Compromises, worldly ways and entanglements, and shameful dishonor to the Lord are the result.

But it cannot be too constantly repeated, that the beginning of all declension is a loss of heart for the things of Christ, and of faith which counts upon Him alone.—S. R.

thou hast not walked in their ways, nor done after their abominations, but, as though that were a very [l]little, thou wast [m]more corrupt than they in all thy ways. [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters! Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: [n]pride, [o]fulness of bread, and [p]careless ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she [q]strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me. Therefore I [r]took them away when I saw [it]. And [s]Samaria hath not sinned according to the half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast [t]justified thy sisters with all thine abominations which thou hast done. Thou also, take upon thee thy shame, thou who hast [u]judged thy sisters; because of thy sins in which thou hast acted more abominably than they: they are [v]more righteous than thou. So be thou [w]ashamed, and bear thy confusion, because thou hast justified thy sisters.

6 (53-63): The victory of grace at last.

6. And I will [x]turn again their captivity, the captivity of [y]Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of

l ch. 8. 17. *cf.* 1 Ki. 16. 31.
m *cf.* 2 Ki. 21. 9, 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1. *cf.* Mt. 10. 15. *cf.* Mt. 11. 24. *cf.* Acts 7. 52.
n *cf.* ch. 28. 2, 9, 17. *cf.* Ps. 138. 6. *cf.* Prov. 16. 5, 18.
o *cf.* Gen. 13. 10. *cf.* Deut. 32. 15. *cf.* Is. 22. 13, 14. *cf.* Lk. 12. 16-20.
p *cf.* Ps. 123. 4. *cf.* Is. 32. 9. *cf.* Amos 6. 1.
q ch. 18. 12. *cf.* Prov. 21. 13. *cf.* Is. 3. 15. *cf.* Jas. 5. 1-6.
r Gen. 19. 24. Deut. 29. 23.
s *cf.* Lk. 12. 47, 48.
t *cf.* Is. 10. 11. *cf.* Jer. 3. 11.
cf. ch. 23. 11. u *cf.* Mt. 7. 1-5; *cf.* Rom. 2. 1, 10, 26, 27; *cf.* Lk. 18. 11. v *cf.* 1 Sa. 24. 17. w ch. 36. 31, 32. x *cf.* Ps. 126. 1. y *cf.* Jer. 20. 16.

lusts, she should no more be able to gratify herself in this way. She had fully proved, as she is again reminded, her Canaanite descent, which was now apparent: "Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter. Your mother was a Hittite, and your father an Amorite." There remained for her but the judgment long since pronounced upon Canaan for their sins; and Judah was but the sister of already judged Samaria—and more, of judged Sodom too. She had exceeded in her enormities even these, and, as the Lord declares, had even justified them, comparatively—she had exceeded them in iniquity. She who had judged her sisters must now take her place along with them and bear her shame. Jerusalem that had looked on in pride of heart while Samaria had gone into captivity, and had ceased to think of Sodom, a mere vacant spot as it were upon the earth which had cast it out, was now to exhibit her guilt in her condemnation as fully as they did.

6. And is this then the end? It might seem indeed to be so. What could be done more than God had done, but in vain? If the story were merely a human one, a dealing of man with man, there would surely be no help, no remedy; and God Himself numbering Judah now with Sodom and with Samaria might seem to argue that *He* had fully and finally given her up. Indeed, interpreters not a few *have* argued from such premises in this very way. If Sodom could return and find blessing, then there might be hope for Jerusalem; but was it not already wiped out from the earth? Yet God takes up this argument to answer it in a way of His own: meeting the challenge from His own words, to say, Well, I will do this thing which is impossible: "Thy sister Sodom and her daughters *shall* return to their first estate, and Samaria and her daughters

[z] Samaria and her daughters, and the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them, that thou mayest bear thy confusion and mayest be confounded for all that thou hast done in that thou comfortedst them. And thy sister [a] Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate, and [b] Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate; thou also and [c] thy daughters shall return to your former estate. For

z *cf.* Jer. 31. 23.
a *cf.* ch. 29. 14. *cf.* ch. 47. 8.
b ver. 53. *cf.* Jer. 31. 5.
c *cf.* Amos 9. 14. *cf.* ch. 36. 11. *cf.* Mal. 3. 4.

shall return to their first estate. Thou also and thy daughters *shall* return to your first estate."

What is intended here seems a difficulty, for it is certain that Sodom has gone out of knowledge. If we look for her upon the earth, we shall not find her; yet it is just of this earthly restitution that Ezekiel, as has often been said already, everywhere speaks. The judgment that he pronounces is not the judgment of eternity, the judgment following after death, but the historical earth-judgment. Thus we are not permitted here to do as some do, and look beyond the grave to find the remedy. The fact that we have just now had before us, that the judgment of Israel was to be at the hands of those with whom she had sinned, shows that it is in the record of the world's history that we are to look for its accomplishment. It is not a question therefore of the standing of souls before God, nor of individuals, whatever inference we may make, as we have to make in many cases, but what is before us here is Sodom as a whole, Samaria as a whole, and so again Jerusalem as a whole. God is acting things out before the eyes of men, in order to give the broad, general lesson so much needed. We do right to carry it further than the mere details of history. If sin is the destruction of any people, it is because it is the destruction of individual souls; and if it is their destruction in this world, assuredly, except God's grace in some way come in, it must be their destruction in the eternity that follows time. But this is not Ezekiel's theme. It is the broad lesson of history to which he would call our attention, and we may be sure that these lessons are of immense importance to us. It was for this that the trial of man, through the forty centuries before Christ, went on. And we know how God in the New Testament takes up the result of this trial. It was "when the world by wisdom knew not God," that "it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe;" and it was "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Thus we may not think lightly of the lessons of history, while there is that, truly, which no earthly history can reveal, of which indeed we must think, and for which all else works.*

If we take what is here clearly revealed, then, Sodom is to reappear in a future generation, with her burden of sin and shame removed, and owned as sister to the tribes of Israel; as in their punishment, so in the grace they can say at last, they have received double for all their sins (Isa. xl. 2). We need not at all be at the trouble to search for her at the present time. God will know how to bring her out of her obscurity in His own due time; but it is certain

* Our Lord had declared it would be more tolerable for Sodom than for the city which rejected Him; and in Revelation (ch. 11: 8) Jerusalem is spiritually called Sodom. The Phariseeism which made self its object, resulted in spiritual abominations and corruptions which can only be characterized in this awful way.—S. R.

Sodom thy sister was not [d]mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride, before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of the reproach of the daughters of Syria and of all that are round about her, the daughters of the Philistines who despised thee on every side. Thy lewdness and thine abominations, thou barest them, saith Jehovah. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will even [e]deal with thee as thou hast done who hast despised the oath and broken the covenant.

[d] *cf.* Is. 65. 5. *cf.* Zeph. 3. 11.

[e] ch. 14.4, etc.

that for other perished nations besides Sodom, the future, according to the word of God, has a resurrection-time at hand. Nor can we fail to see, if we have eyes for it, some anticipations of such things furnished by present history. Thus has Italy been finding her lost national unity again; and Greece is upon the way to realize this also.* In some cases it seems indeed as if there were to be, not a resurrection of life, but rather a resurrection of judgment. Into all this it is not the place to inquire here; but, for various purposes of righteousness or of grace, God will certainly show, as the Preacher assures us, that He "requireth that which is past" (Eccl. iii. 15). This, once more, is only part of that implied in the revolution of the wheel which again and again Ezekiel brings before us, in which we may see the lesson it surely has for us. The divine Word thus positively assures us that "Sodom and her daughters shall return to their first estate;" "Samaria and her daughters shall return" also—guaranteed by Scripture again and again, though disputed still (perhaps less and less however). The verity of the judgment which has come is only the seal upon the verity of the restoration that shall come. The wheel is, in fact, revolving; and that which brings down will bring up again.†

So the double assurance is given here: "Thy lewdness and thine abominations, thou barest them, saith Jehovah; for thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, who hast despised the oath and broken the covenant. Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and establish to thee an everlasting covenant. And thou shalt remember thy ways and be confounded, when thou receivest thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger one; for I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not because of thy covenant; and I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah." Thus, if on man's side the covenant with God has been broken, from God's side, breach there really can never be.‡

* Since the 10 years when this was written, Greece has taken further strides, and even now seems on the verge of assuming the national prominence foretold in Scripture.—S. R.

† Sodom, we must remember, was a typical Canaanite city. If the "mother" was overthrown, the "daughters" were spared, and in Zoar (the "little one" spared for Lot's sake) we see the perpetuation of the Canaanite, which in the latter day will blossom out in what will answer to a literal restoration of Sodom.—S. R.

‡ It is instructive to note the causes which developed such abominable iniquity in Sodom—"Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness." Pride, the exaltation of self, comes first. It is the sin of Satan, as it is declared in chap. 28. Pride's self-sufficiency has no need of mercy nor of grace; it says to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Next comes "fulness of bread"—no need which would force a cry to God. It is notorious in the world's history that wealth and luxury are the cause of moral and manly decay.

"Abundance of idleness" leaves the soul open for the lusts of the flesh to assert themselves. Vices flourish in luxuries, until unspeakable corruption brings God's judgment

Nevertheless, I will [f]remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and establish to thee an [g]everlasting covenant. And thou shalt [h]remember thy ways, and be confounded, when thou receivest thy [i]sisters, thine elder and thy younger ones: for I will give them unto thee for [j]daughters, but [k]not because of thy covenant. And I will [l]establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah; that thou mayest remember, and be ashamed, and [m]no more open thy mouth because of thy confusion, when I am [n]propitiated as to thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[f] Lev. 26. 42, 45. Ps. 105. 8. Jer. 2. 2. Jer. 33. 20-26. Hos. 2. 15. *cf.* Lk. 1. 72.
[g] Jer. 32. 40. ch. 37. 26, 27. Is. 55. 3. *cf.* Heb. 8. 10.
[h] ver. 63. *cf.* 20. 43.
[i] *cf.* Is. 2. 2-5. *cf.* Is. 60. 8-10.
[j] *cf.* Is. 54. 1. *cf.* Is. 49. 18-

23. *k cf.* Jer. 31. 31-34 with Heb. 8. 8-13. *l cf.* Gen. 9. 9; *cf.* Ps. 89. 3; *cf.* Is. 55. 3; *cf.* Heb. 13. 20. *m cf.* Ps. 85. 1, 2; *cf.* Rom. 3. 27; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9. *n cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2.

This covenant in the days of Israel's youth we must not confound, as has been already said, with the mere legal covenant which Israel so readily entered into, but which has had such bitter fruit. The covenant which God remembered when He took up Israel at the first was, as we have seen, His covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; and those three names give what is to be His memorial to all generations (Ex. iii. 15). So also the everlasting covenant which He will establish with them is expressly said to be a *new* covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31-34): "*Not* according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, though I was a husband to them, saith the Lord." To confound these contrasted covenants would seem to be impossible for us; yet it has been done, and is being done continually. The covenant with their fathers they could not break; it had no conditions which might entail the loss of its blessings. The Sinaitic covenant is distinctly marked out in the very passage before us as *not* that covenant: "I will give them unto thee for daughters," says the Lord here, "but *not* because of *thy* covenant." "*Thy* covenant" He calls it, because man with his legal heart necessitated, as it continually does in individual experience, the allowing of a law which could yet perfect nothing, and with which God thus finds fault—not indeed for lack of holiness in it or anything unsuited in that way to His requirements, but just because it is that requirement which, to those who are under it, yields nothing but the knowledge of sin and self-hopelessness. Indeed *that* is its true and worthy fruit. But then, as the apostle says, if God speaks of a new covenant, He has made the first old; and it is according to the new covenant that He says here: "I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah; that thou mayest remember and be ashamed, and no more open thy mouth because of thy confusion, when I am propitiated as to thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord Jehovah." Here the fruit of

upon the putrid mass. When, in the language of the Roman satirist, "the Orontes flowed into the Tiber"—oriental luxury and vice displaced the manly energy of former days—the great empire tottered to its fall. Nations can no more afford to be idle than individuals. Peoples of a rough northern climate or bleak mountain lands, often put to shame those under a balmy sky where sloth flourishes.

So in spiritual things, the saint must meet the foe, must toil and wrestle with an apparently barren condition, if he is to avoid succumbing to the deceits of this world. There is special warning in this for the young believer. "It is good that a man bear the yoke in his youth"—learn to endure hardness, and thus become a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—S. R.

SECTION 4 (Chap. xvii.).

The mercy to an abased kingdom; yet its failure.

1 (1-10): The parable

1. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, put forth a °riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: A great ᵖeagle with great wings, long pinioned, full of feathers which had ᑫdivers colors, came unto ʳLebanon and took the topmost ˢbranch of the cedar. He cropped off the topmost of the young shoots thereof,

o *cf.* Judg. 9. 8-15, etc. *cf.* Judg. 14. 12-19. *cf.* 2 Sa. 12. 1-4.
p vers. 7, 12. *cf.* Jer. 4. 13. *cfr.* Ex. 19. 4 with Deut. 32. 11 and Is. 63. 9.
q *cf.* Dan. 2. 37, 38. *cf.* Dan. 3. 29.
r *cf.* Deut. 3. 25; *cf.* 2 Ki. 14. 9; *cf.* Song 4. 8. s 2 Ki. 24. 17, 18.

Christ's work is, as we see, recognized. The glory, over which the law necessitated a veil, is now in open sight.

Sec. 4.

Having thus seen Israel in her relation to God, and in what comes from this on *her* side, and on *God's* side—the judgment, and the grace which follows the judgment—we return now to what is more simply history, but which has of necessity, as ever, its spiritual lesson, as all history will have if it be read aright. We have, here, the mercy which had been shown to the abased kingdom, in the long days of its latter declension, when God yet waited upon it in patient long-suffering. But this mercy failed to effect recovery, as we see here; and it must be reserved to a future day, in which it will manifest itself at last in triumph. This brings in, of course, a prophecy of Messiah, the future King; for in all this part, in which judgment is assured and imminent, the promise of future dawn is held out for faith, to deliver from a hopelessness which is not of Him who is "the God of all encouragement."

1. We have first a parable put forth, of which the interpretation is given afterwards. It is significant, as to the use of a parable, that it should be given with its interpretation alongside of it; which one might think to be the whole matter. It is evident that in pictures such as these we have what strikes the mind and fastens upon the imagination in a peculiar way; and God does not disdain to use these helps for men's attention. Certainly everything is full of parables, if we had only skill to read them; parables which are not mere chance applications, but everywhere rooted in the very nature of things. God's wisdom is everywhere seen in that with which He has surrounded man in all his history. It needed no apology therefore that Ezekiel should be, what they in fact accused him of being, "a speaker of parables." It showed that he was in the line of that universal teaching which divine wisdom has appointed for us, which connects itself with what is before our eyes, that we might never lose sight of it. How good it would be if our minds were spiritually trained in the interpretation of parables! When the Lord asked His disciples the question: "How then will ye know *all* parables?" did it not imply that He intended them to know what was thus set before them for their exercise? Yet we are not ashamed to own our want of skill in such things, and so far despise what Scripture calls "the deep things of God."

The parable here, as all true parables are, is from God Himself: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: A great eagle with great wings, long-pinioned, full of feathers, which had divers colors, came unto Lebanon, and took the topmost branch of the cedar. He cropped off the topmost of the young shoots thereof, and carried

and [t]carried it into a land of merchants; in a [u]city of traders he set it. And he took of the seed of the land and planted it in a [v]fruitful soil; he placed it beside many waters, he set it as a willow, and it sprouted and became a spreading [w]vine of low stature, so that its branches might turn towards [x]him, and its roots might be under him; and it became a vine, and [y]produced branches and shot forth sprigs. There was

t cf. Jer. 51. 13 with Is. 47. 15.
u cf. Rev. 18. 3. *cf.* Nah. 3. 4 with Zech. 14. 21.
v cf. Deut. 8. 7-9.
2 Ki. 24. 17.
w ver. 14.
x 2 Ki. 24. 17-20.
y Jer. 37. 1, 2; 2 Chr. 36. 11-13.

it into a land of merchants. In a city of traders he set it. And he took of the seed of the land and planted it in a fruitful soil. He placed it beside many waters; he set it as a willow, and it sprouted, and became a spreading vine of low stature; so that its branches might turn towards him and its roots might be under him. And it became a vine, and produced branches and shot forth sprigs." Here is plainly a story of humiliation, and yet of mercy mingling with the humiliation. He had once reminded them of a deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and how He had borne them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself (Ex. 19: 4). This, however, is not what we have here. It is not in Egypt or the wilderness that the scene is laid; nor is it the beginning of a nation that is spoken of; but of the Cedar of Lebanon, which in fact Israel was, with the sign of its former glory. The interpretation leaves no doubt of this: "Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and took its king and its princes, and brought them to him to Babylon; and he took one of the seed royal and made a covenant with him, and brought him under an oath. He took away the mighty of the land, that the kingdom might be abased, that it might not lift itself up, that it might keep his covenant in order to stand." It is, plainly, the history of Zedekiah that is thus before us. Jehoiachin had been plucked off and carried away in the captivity from which, as we have seen, Ezekiel dates his own prophecies. Jehoiachin never returned, and the captivity of Judah was already begun. Daniel himself belonged to the beginning of this transportation to Babylon.

Thus the great eagle is Nebuchadnezzar, a royal bird, his royalty being derived from God Himself; yet a bird of prey, whose great wings show the extent of his dominion, as well, perhaps, as the rapidity with which he acquired power. The feathers of divers colors are the heterogeneous multitudes which followed him; yet he is plainly under divine control, and his acts towards Israel are at first gentleness itself, as far as a king of Babylon could show this. If he crops off the topmost shoots of the cedar, it is to carry them to a land of merchants, a city of traders. We see in Daniel himself an illustration of this conduct; in the captives of Tel-abib we see how they could find their hope in it. But Israel as a whole was not yet rooted out of the land. He took of the seed of it and planted it in a fruitful soil. Nebuchadnezzar placed it beside many waters, set it as a willow that its branches might turn towards himself. This was everywhere, and necessarily, the policy of the empire, whose interest was to encourage in a subjective way the growth of various powers under it, independent of one another while dependent upon himself. Thus one might be used against another, and the empire sustained by these divided interests. Here we find the beginning of Zedekiah's history. His significant name, "Jehovah's righteousness," was soon to be the illustration of it against himself. The kingdom, under Nebuchadnezzar's policy, was reviving hopefully. It was

also [z] another great eagle with great wings and many feathers; and, behold, this vine did bend its roots [a] toward him, and shot forth its branches toward him, that he might [b] water it from the beds of its plantation. In a [c] good field, by many waters, it had been planted to produce leaves and to bear fruit, that it might be a [d] noble vine. Say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, [e] Shall it prosper? Shall he not [f] pull up its roots and cut off its fruit that it may wither? All its fresh sprouting leaves shall wither, and [g] not by a great army or many people, to pluck it up by its roots. And, behold, when it is planted, shall it thrive? Shall it not utterly wither when the east wind toucheth it? It shall [h] wither in the beds where it grew.

2 (11-21): The interpretation.

2. And the [i] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Say now to the [j] rebellious house, Know ye not what these things are? Say, Behold, the [k] king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and took its king and its princes and brought them to him to Babylon. And he took one of the [l] seed royal and made a covenant with him, and brought him under an oath. He took away the

z Jer. 37. 5–7.
a *cf.* Is. 30. 2.
b *cf.* Jer. 2. 18.
c ver. 5. *cf.* Ps. 80. 8–11.
d *cf.* Jer. 2. 21.
e *cf.* Num. 14. 41. *cfr.* 2 Chr. 20. 20.
f *cf.* 2 Ki. 25. 1-7.
g *cf.* ver. 17. *cf.* Lev. 26. 36.
h *cf.* Hos. 13. 15. *cf.* Mt. 21. 19.
i ver. 1. ch. 18. 1, etc.
j ch. 2. 5, 8, etc.
k ver. 3, etc. Jer. 22. 24–28.
l Jer. 37. 1. 2 Ki. 24. 17. 2 Chr. 36. 13.

indeed but as a vine of low stature; it could be nothing else, but it produced branches and shot forth sprigs. But soon the spirit of independence arose which was to work the total downfall of the nation.

Another great eagle is seen with great wings and many feathers; it is the king of Egypt, but in no wise with the power of the king of Babylon; yet for this very reason more capable of being made use of, while having sufficient power, as they hoped, to enable them to stand by his help against Babylon's rising power, which was much more to be feared. Thus did this vine bend its roots towards *him*, and shot forth its branches toward him, that he might water it from the beds of its plantation. There was nothing to be pleaded for this on the ground of any oppression by Nebuchadnezzar. On the contrary, Israel might still have prospered in bowing to Jehovah's will. It was still, according to the language of the prophet, in a good field, by many waters, and had been planted to be a noble vine. God had declared His purpose as to Babylon, so that rebellion against it was rebellion against Him. It was resistance to the chastening which the Lord had appointed for blessing, if they had received it as such.* But all was forfeited by this resistance. The question then is capable of but one answer: "Shall it prosper? Shall he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, that it may wither?" This, surely, would be the result, if God's word and His power counted for anything. What was the power of Egypt that it should be opposed to Him? "Shall it not utterly wither," the Lord asks, "when the east wind toucheth it?"—but "toucheth" it! and of course it did.

2. The people are not left to interpret this parable for themselves. That they may be without excuse, God Himself will give them the interpretation. They are to be plainly told the issue of this breach of a covenant which had

* This is clearly seen in the closing part of Jeremiah, where the whole situation is the same, both in the exhortations of the prophet, and the disastrous consequences of their going down into Egypt (chaps. 34–52).—S. R.

[m]mighty of the land that the kingdom might be abased,* that it might not lift itself up, that it might [n]keep his covenant, in order to stand. But he [o]rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors to [p]Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? Shall he break the covenant, and yet escape? [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, verily, in the place of the king that made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke, even with him in the [q]midst of Babylon shall he die. Neither shall Pharaoh with a great army and a large assembly do [r]anything for him in the war when they cast up mounds and build forts to cut off many persons. He hath [s]despised the oath and broken the covenant; yea, behold, he had given his hand, yet hath he done all these things: he shall not escape. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [As] I live, verily, mine oath which he hath despised and my covenant which he hath broken, even this will I [t]recompense upon his head. And I will spread my [u]net over him and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to [v]Babylon, and will enter into judgment with him there for his unfaithfulness in which he hath been unfaithful against me. And all his fugitives with all his bands shall [w]fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered towards every wind, and ye shall [x]know that I Jehovah have spoken.

3 (22-24): The revival of David's house in Messiah.

3. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I also will take of the topmost [y]branch of the high cedar, and will set it: I

* Lit., "it might be a base kingdom."

m Dan. 1.1,2. *cf.* Jer. 24. 1 with Jer. 52. 16.
n Jer. 27. 12-17. Jer. 38. 17.
o *cf.* Is. 30. 1-4.
p *cf.* Is. 36. 6-9.
cf. Deut. 17. 16.
q Jer. 32. 4, 5. Jer. 39. 5-7.
r *cf.* Lam. 4. 17 with Is. 31. 1.
s *cf.* ch. 16. 59. *ctr.* Josh. 9. 20.
cf. Lam. 5. 6.
t ch. 21. 23-26. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.
u ch. 12. 13. ch. 32. 3.
v *cf.* 2 Chr. 33. 11. ver. 16.
w ch. 12. 13, 14. Jer. 52. 8.
x ch. 6. 7, 10, etc.
y *cf.* ch. 34. 29. *cf.* Is. 11. 1. *cf.* Ps. 80. 15. *cf.* Jer. 23. 5-8. *cf.* Jer. 33. 15, 16. *cf.* Zech. 3. 8. *cf.* Zech. 4. 12-14. *cf.* Zech. 6. 12, 13.

solemnly been made in the name of the Lord with Nebuchadnezzar; the breach of which could only make heavier the chastisement which had already come, and thoroughly arm God as well as man against them. Thus the royal power in Israel, which was to have been for the deliverance of the people, was now to involve them completely in its doom: "As I live," says the Lord, of Zedekiah, "Verily in the place of the king that made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon shall he die. I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will bring him to Babylon, and will enter into judgment with him there for his unfaithfulness in which he hath been unfaithful to Me." Plainly, the whole character of Israel as the people of the Lord was gone, and nothing remained for them but complete scattering, which would assure them at last what their unbelief had refused to own, that Jehovah had spoken!

3. Such then, for many centuries, was the end of the throne of David; yet God had guaranteed that throne with a promise which no failure of man could possibly set aside. Nay, in giving it, God had contemplated the failure, and declared what He would do: "I will establish his seed forever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in mine

will crop off from the top of its young shoots a [z] tender one and will plant it upon a mountain, high and exalted. Upon the [a] mountain height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall [b] bring forth branches, and bear fruit, and become a [c] noble cedar; and under it shall [d] dwell all birds of every wing; in the shadow of its branches shall they dwell. And [e] all the trees of the field shall

z *cf.* Is. 53. 2 with Lk. 4. 22, etc.
a Is 52. 13.
Ps. 72. 11.
b *cf.* Ps. 92. 12, 13.
cf. Jno. 15. 1, 2, etc.
cf. Ps. 72. 16.
c *cf.* Acts 5. 30, 31.

d *cf.* ch. 31. 6 with Dan. 4. 12; *cf.* Gen. 49. 10, 22, etc; *cf.* Ps. 22. 27–30; *cf.* Is. 49. 18–23. e *cf.* Is. 55. 12, 13; *cf.* Is. 60. 3; *cf.* Ps. 2. 10–12.

ordinances; if they profane my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter that which has gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne shall be as the sun before Me" (Ps. lxxxix. 29–36).

Therefore, while avenging their breaking of the covenant, God will surely not forget His own; and while the rod is upon David's house for its unfaithfulness, the assurance is at once given that God is not as man to repent, and that He will be to Israel at last, what the Babylonian eagle could only be by contrast, representing as it did, God's tender hand in their present discipline: "Thus, saith the Lord Jehovah, *I* will also take of the topmost branch of the high cedar, and will set it. I will crop off from the top of its young shoots a tender one, and will plant it upon a mountain high and exalted."

For God, the cedar remains therefore, though He seem now to be calling that which is not as though it were. But this cedar of David's house rises up only to fuller stature, as it were, out of its degradation, when Christ of whom the Spirit speaks here becomes the Head of it; humbled, and accepting the deepest possible humiliation, when every promise of blessing to the people who refused Him will seem to have come to an end forever. What blessing can there be, we might ask, for those who have refused the Deliverer when He came and, in a way beyond all that Zedekiah could possibly do, hurled defiance against Him who sent His Son for man's salvation? Yet, in the resurrection of Him who went down thus to death for man, is the assurance of the fulfilment of every promise: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I also will take of the highest branch of the lofty cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of its young shoots a tender one, and I will plant it upon a mountain high and exalted. Upon the mountain height of Israel will I plant it." There is here no question of legal conditions at all, nor breach of covenant, which we see all through Israel's history, to affect Jehovah's promise in grace when He takes up her cause. It is a new beginning, as we see. It is the branch cropped off by Jehovah which now becomes a noble cedar, and all birds of every wing shall dwell in the shadow of its branches. Here comes at last the universal refuge from the oppressor, the beneficent power in which the weakest shall rejoice. All the music of heaven shall be heard amid its branches. Here at last is One in whom God shall fully display Himself, and in whom will be revealed the secret of all God's former dealings with the nation, and with men at large. Man's pride is brought down that thus abased he may be rightly exalted. The tree, once so green to man's eye, is dried up that it may flourish again after God's mind. Ezekiel's wheel, and the Preacher's, has made now its final revolution! Thank

know that I Jehovah have *f*brought down the high tree, have *g*exalted the low tree, have *h*dried up the green tree, and made the *i*dry tree flourish: I Jehovah have *j*spoken and will do it.

f 1 Sa. 2. 7,8. *cf.* Is. 2. 13-17.
g cf. Is. 9. 6,7. *cf.* Is. 53. 11, 12.
h Ps. 75. 6, 7. Lk. 23. 31. *cf.* Mt. 2..19, 0.
i cf. Num. 17. 6 10.
j ch. 12. 25, etc.

SECTION 5 (Chap. xviii.).

The righteous ways of God.

1 (1-9): With the righteous man.

1. And the *k*word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this *l*proverb in the land of Israel, saying, The *m*fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? [As] I live,

k ch. 17. 1, etc.
l cf. ch. 12. 22.
m Jer. 31. 29 30. *cf.* Lam. 5. 7.

God, it will need to revolve no more; for here is One come who, having been abased, is now exalted, and shall never again be abased. By *His* abasement all has been secured. It was "overturn, overturn, overturn," till He should come whose right it was, and now it is given Him. God has put His seal upon this: "I, Jehovah, have spoken, and will do it." *

Sec. 5.

We have now another chapter after the manner of, and according to the line of things committed to Ezekiel—the affirmation of God's righteous ways in government. These governmental ways form the matter of his whole prophecy hitherto. And they are ways that need to be affirmed; for in God's government of the world, clouds and darkness are round about Him, and we have here that in which the whole law given to Israel finds its explanation. Even now, with His face fully seen, as Moses yet could not see it, we are in some sense upon the mount with Moses still hearing Him say: "Thou canst not see my face." And though we may be consciously hidden and safe under His hand while His glory passes by, yet still what we see is just the glory of the back parts—glory after it is passed. The apostle says of the chastening Hand (which so often is like a cloud encompassing the throne), "Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." Faith, therefore, is the requisite all through; but it is faith, now, in One who has fully manifested Himself in Christ, so that as to what He Himself is there should be henceforth no rightful question. But His ways may still perplex us; and the exercise which we have under them is intended as part of the wholesome discipline under which we are.

* Let it be borne in mind that the prophet refers, not to the *first* coming of our Lord, but to His final revelation as the King of His people, which introduces the millennial reign. He is seen indeed at His first coming as "a root out of a dry ground"—ready to be the Deliverer. But "His own received Him not;" Messiah was cut off and had nothing. The true Vine was refused, save by the remnant of His people, who became the nucleus of a new order, the Church. "We have no king but Cæsar," shows how the people still leaned upon the arm of flesh, and their house remained desolate. It will be so until (after the close of the present day of grace) the remnant will turn in faith to the One whom they have previously disregarded. "Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the BRANCH that Thou madest strong for Thyself . . . Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" (Ps. 80: 14-17). Then will this tender Shoot spread abroad its branches, and redeemed Israel will dwell under the shadow of the Vine of the Lord. "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit" (Is. 27: 6). But it will be through Him whose voice they shall at last hear saying—"From ME is thy fruit found." "His branches shall spread, and His beauty shall be as the olive tree, and His smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under His shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine" (Hos. 14: 6-8).—S. R.

saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, [n]all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that [o]sinneth, it shall die.

[n] Num. 16. 22. *cf.* Zech. 12. 1.
[o] *cf.* Gen. 2. 17. *cf.* Rom. 6. 23. *cf.* Rom. 5. 12.

With Israel under the law, the glory was under a covering; and here we have to look at things necessarily from the standpoint of men in those days. The chapter before us deals with the unbelief which prevailed so much in Israel, which argued from what was but the consequence of their own sin, against the righteousness, as well as the goodness, of God's chastening hand.

1. The statement of the chapter is very full, and we see easily God's earnestness about it. It is not of little account to Him what man, the creature He has made, may make of Him. He is saying here, as in the opening words of another prophet: "Come, let us reason together;" although upon His side, there is here little of what we might call reasoning. He reasons in fact upon that in man which should be obvious upon the mere statement of it, which if denied would mean there was no God at all, none worthy to be called that. On the other hand, man's arguments are but those of unbelief, of self-ignorance; for he who knows not God, we may be sure, knows not himself to begin with. We must come to ourselves in order to come to Him. As surely as we have taken our true place before Him, so surely will His glory shine upon us.

"And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, What mean ye that ye use this proverb in the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge?" It is to be noted that it was *in the land of Israel* that this proverb was being used; the land of God's gift to them, the land that was emphatically "a good land," a land into which God had brought them by the display of most wonderful miracles, beating down the haughtiest power on earth existing then, to give them deliverance, and executing judgment upon Egypt's false gods in a way which rang in the ears of the nations around for long. It was in this good land they could speak of "sour grapes" which their fathers had eaten, and their children's teeth were set on edge through no failure of their own! How little need of argument, one would say, against a proverb of this sort in the land and among the people of Israel! All the more, and because these people are the objects of His love, for whom He has shown Himself mighty, must He silence this talk forever: "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have any more to use this proverb in Israel." In fact, throughout all the judgments which the prophet had had to announce, we have heard echoing again and again the assurance that He is Jehovah, the One who took them up under this Name. How plainly His heart is in the answer: "Behold, all souls are mine. As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." Will they take from Him the souls of those He has created? Will they doubt His care and goodness toward those whom He had created? Will they think, in the face of the goodness which He has lavished upon them, that those for whom He has thus provided are of no concern to Him? And as the apostle asks long after, "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles?" As surely as man is man, wherever he is, so surely must God be God to them all. Clouds and darkness may be round about Him, but is the sun less bright because it is hidden? And are the clouds that encompass it of heaven or of earth?

We must remember that Israel was brought into special relationship with God

as Creator. As such the very opening of their inspired oracles declare Him ; and if Israel had special nearness to Him, yet, even where this is declared, there is careful remembrance of His relation to all others on the same ground. Thus, if God says to Pharaoh : "Israel is my son, even my first-born," the first-born son implies there are other sons. And if there be a special promise to Abraham and to his seed, that promise (indirectly, but as truly) takes in others: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Thus the relationship of the Creator to His creatures is especially insisted on in the Old Testament. So the Psalmist (Ps. cxxxix. 13–16), if troubled at the omniscient eye of God ever upon him, has but to go back and consider how that same eye watched over him before ever he was born, while gradually that delicately interwoven body of his was forming. How could he do other than welcome the eye of such an One to search him through and through? So, pitiful even in His anger, God says in Isa. lvii. 16: "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth : for the spirit should fail before Me, and *the souls that I have made.*"

True, death has come into the old creation, and God does not forget it here. It is His own penalty, and He cannot overlook it. It is meant to have meaning for man. The very law is the ministration of it ; and if all souls are His, the soul of the son as of the father is an object of emphatic interest to Him : none the less is it true that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." It is solemnly affirmed that it is for his *own* sins that man dies—not for the sins of another.

We must pause a moment here to consider (what has been considered elsewhere and in various places) what the "soul" is that is intended here, and what death. The "soul that sinneth" is so constantly assumed to be the immortal part of man, and therefore the death, with which it is connected, an immortal death, as it were, that we must stop to consider the Old Testament's constant speech as to this, and the law which is in a special way the spirit of the Old Testament. It has often been said that if it is the judgment of eternity that is affirmed in the law, and its death-judgment eternal death, then God has pledged Himself that every sinner shall receive eternal condemnation. But we know this is contrary to every principle that Scripture declares. God has not thus bound Himself as to be unable to show grace ; nor could He play fast and loose with what He has declared. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" is the patent fact before all men, and pressed upon them by what is itself the ministration of death. It is the undeniable reality of this fact, that all men are under the sentence of death, which makes the law a true and full test of man's condition—shows his inability to stand before God in judgment. It says, "The man that doeth these things shall live in them." Is it not plain that the man who really doeth these things, in a way *absolutely according to God*, could not be under the sentence of death at all? How could God put such a sentence upon one who is altogether according to His mind? Ah, but *that* is the contention. Does God really mean that *all* must be according to His mind? Does He not know, do we not all know and confess, that men are sinners? And if we be so, why any test of man in this way at all?

The answer is, that man will ever mix up God's mercy and man's righteousness, so as to get credit for himself for whatever partial righteousness he thinks he can furnish ; and God did, in fact, in the *second* giving of the law, contemplate this very thought which was in man's heart. With the *first* giving of the law no promise of forgiveness was attached ; the trial was soon over, as we

But if a man be [p]righteous and do judgment and justice: he hath not [q]eaten upon the mountains, nor lifted up his [r]eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, nor hath [s]defiled his neighbor's wife, nor come [t]near to a woman in her separation, nor hath [u]wronged any;

[p] Ps. 15. 2-5. Rom. 2. 7-10. Rom. 10. 5.
[q] ch. 20. 28.
[r] ch. 33. 25.
[s] ch. 33. 26.
[t] Lev. 18. 19.
[u] Ex. 22. 21. *cf.* Mk. 10. 19.

know. The golden calf was the end of that; and the tables of the covenant as first made were simply broken under the mount, and never reached the people. In the *second* giving of the law God declares that He is not only righteous but "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth . . . forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Here, then, is a provision made for those who are allowed—what, in fact, the first trial proved them so clearly to be—sinners. God was ready to forgive sins—though the ground of it is not yet stated—with regard to every one who truly turns to Him. Yet, according to this, man is under a legal system still; and it is of the essence of a legal system that God should say that He can "by no means clear the guilty." How reconcile this with the forgiveness which He has just declared? Where shall the line be drawn? *How much* sin will God forgive? And where will He put the limit? Here man would interpret in the easiest way according to the measure of his own light thoughts, making God such an one as himself. It is of all importance, therefore, to show precisely what God means, and to declare also from His side what must be the issue of such a trial. And this is not held back at all. The ten commandments are the measure of the righteousness God requires. But who can yield to Him this requirement? And if that be the measure (however often God may come in to cancel the past, and bid him begin again) will man, in result, be anything else but guilty, at any time God comes in? and then how can God clear him? Thus, clearly, it is of this second giving of the law that the apostle asserts it is "the ministration of death and condemnation." No need to say so as to the first. It was of the time when God had declared His mercy, and thus His glory, which made the face of Moses to shine, that the apostle is speaking; and how important it is to realize that God here actually cuts off all hope as to the issue. No man can stand before Me and live, He says. How far does *that* go? Moses himself, the mediator of this covenant, can in no wise behold His face, as He declares. After He has *gone by*, God will take away His hand and let him see His back parts; but this is God turned—His back, not the face. And this is the constant tenor of the law. Man misreads it because he is anxious to maintain his own righteousness in whatever fragment of it he thinks himself able.

But *grace* was always in God's heart; and grace is the only possible hope for any. "But if it be of grace," says the apostle, "it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace." You cannot mix these principles at all. The legal system could not but be a ministration of death to man. And this yet has its use, as is also plain. The law becomes in this very way the handmaid of the gospel, cutting off all hope derived from human effort, and thus making us debtors to God's grace alone. How suited to this character of it, then, that the law should affirm, not the penalty of eternity (unseen as yet), but the penalty which man can plainly see exacted from man day by day, the penalty which in its universality is designed to cut off hope absolutely from all on that ground. Thus the death must be the present death; and God can maintain the penalty

he hath [v]restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by [w]robbery, hath given his [x]bread to the hungry, and covered the naked with a garment: he hath not given forth upon [y]usury, nor taken increase: he hath [z]withdrawn his hand from unrighteousness, hath executed true [a]judgment between man and man, hath [b]walked in my statutes, and kept mine ordinances to deal faithfully: he is righteous; he shall surely [c]live, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[v] Deut. 24. 12, 13.
[w] Is. 59. 6, 7.
[x] Job 31. 16-20. Is 58. 7.
[y] Neh. 5. 7.
[z] Is. 33. 15.
[a] Lev. 19. 15, 35.
[b] Ps. 19 7-11.
[c] ch. 20. 11. *cf.* Rom. 3. 20 with Gal. 3. 21.

here and now, while holding to His own grace as to the eternity that follows. All is absolutely clear and perfectly consistent.

The death here in Ezekiel, then, is not what we think of as the death of the soul. It is "the soul that sinneth" that dies, true; but what *is* the soul in this Old Testament language? Just the person himself, the man who was made "a living soul." The soul of the father and the soul of the son is just the person of the father and of the son, and this use is retained in our common language.* And it is well to see how perfectly all this unites with the whole character of Ezekiel's prophecy, which contemplates the world and God's judgment of the nations as nations, of Israel as a nation, judgment executed by special instruments, as here by Nebuchadnezzar. Eternal judgment is entirely out of the question. It is not Nebuchadnezzar who inflicts eternal penalty.

Another difficulty must also be considered here. It will be said, and rightly, that the penalty of death, of which God speaks by Ezekiel in, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" can scarcely be a penalty resting upon all, when God Himself positively exempts the righteous from it. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" is but in contrast with the righteous man who shall not die, but live; and that God is not speaking of absolute righteousness, but of those who in heart are His own, who are constantly spoken of, in the Old Testament especially, as "the righteous." Nor that it means the righteous by faith, as it was not the principle yet clearly announced.

We acknowledge this to be true. It is the man *righteous in character* of whom God is speaking, distinguished in this way from the wicked, even while he "the righteous" lays no claim to any *absolute* righteousness. Yet he escapes death as it is spoken of here. We can easily see how some at once would say: Here, at least, it must be eternal death that is intended. But, whatever the implication, that is not what is meant. It is death, no question, but as a special judgment of God—not as what comes upon man so universally that he thinks of it as the law of nature with him; but it is a cutting off before the time, in such a way as declares God's wrath upon the person so cut off.

It is the same here as ever in the Old Testament therefore; just what we call natural death, but as a special infliction. For instance, we have no difficulty in understanding what the apostle means when he says to the Corinthians (because of their profanation of the Lord's supper). "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." And he adds as to it: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged," while at the same time carefully preserving the grace in which the Christian stands by the declaration, "But

* It is interesting to find in the Syriac New Testatment the word *nephesh*, "soul," constantly used for "self."—S. R.

2 (10-20): With the son of the righteous or wicked according as he is himself righteous or wicked.

2. Now if he have begotten a [d]son that is violent, a shedder of blood, and doeth to his brother any of those things; and that doeth not any of those [duties], but hath even eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbor's wife, hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by robbery, hath not restored the pledge and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, hath given forth upon usury and taken increase; shall he then live? He shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his [e]blood shall be upon him.

d *cf.* 1 Sa. 2. 12, etc.

e Lev. 20. 9 11, 12, etc.

when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Thus there is a death in judgment here which is, nevertheless, *not* eternal judgment, but which is God's open manifestation of what departure from Him naturally leads to. So the apostle John speaks again: "If any one see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life, for them that sin not unto death. There *is* a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." This is perhaps more than what is necessary to be said upon the matter, but Christians and commentators have so largely gone astray with regard to just such things.

As already said, Ezekiel keeps constantly in view what the law has in view, the tribunal of God in His providential dealings with men *upon earth*. He is, through all this, contemplating the issue and the end of this very legal covenant; and thus the penalty which He announces is the penalty in human history.

In the first place, then, the Lord speaks of His way with a righteous man—not absolutely such, as already said, but distinctively so: "If a man be righteous, and do judgment and justice, he hath not eaten upon the mountains, nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, . . . he hath walked in my statutes and kept mine ordinances to deal faithfully; he is righteous; he shall surely live, saith the Lord Jehovah." This was entirely subversive, therefore, of the proverb which Israel was using. There is no question about their ancestry; each one was responsible for himself; and this is the basic principle of all that follows.

2. In the second place we have the son of the righteous, or the son of the wicked, as he is *himself* righteous or wicked. First, as to the son of the righteous: If this righteous man "have begotten a son that is violent, a shedder of blood . . . shall he live because of his father's righteousness?" This was an important question for the Jew, and especially for the Jew of the captivity, who with the nation under God's dealings, cut off from their land and temple, more and more learned to fall back upon the merits of Abraham, which Rabbis pressed to the extent of involving in some sense the acceptance of all his natural seed. The question is turned back upon them. Here was a father who had *not* eaten sour grapes; did it prevent his children having their teeth on edge? God was dealing with them for *their own* sins; and all the privileges they had through Abraham were necessarily forfeited, if in their own character they were not the true seed of Abraham.*

* This is dwelt upon by our Lord in John 8, where it is well to note the distinction *He* makes between Abraham's *seed*—according to the flesh—and Abraham's *children* according to faith and new birth. See John 8: 37, 39.—S. R.

Now, lo, if [f]he have begotten a son that [g]seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth [h]not such like: he hath not eaten upon the mountains, nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbor's wife, and hath not oppressed any, nor withholden the pledge, nor spoiled by robbery; hath given his bread to the hungry, and covered the naked with a garment; hath withdrawn his hand from the poor; hath not received usury nor increase; he hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes: he shall not die [i]for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

[f] *cf.* 2 Ki. 16. 19, 20.
[g] *cf.* 2 Chr. 29. 6 11.
[h] ch. 20. 18.
[i] vers. 19, 20. *cf.* Jer. 16. 11-13.

Next comes the question of the son of the wicked man, who "sees all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like." This should ever be the result with one who has had such an object lesson before him. If he read it aright, so as to turn from his father's iniquity and to walk in the divine statutes, should he die for the iniquity of his father? Nay, he should surely live. Father and son are thus judged according to their own personal character.

But they raise the objection: "Why? Doth not the son bear the iniquity of his father?" Spite of many commentators, the second commandment of the law is evidently in question here. It was that which gave a seeming excuse for the proverb itself. For God had declared that He *was* "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep my commandments." It seems evident that the resentful thought that is in the mind of those overtaken by the present calamities of the nation, is that the third and fourth generations were suffering for faults that were in no wise their own. Allowing the wickedness of former generations—which is not so hard to confess as one's own—they admit that their fathers indeed ate the sour grapes, but not themselves. But the commandment speaks quite otherwise than this; for those who love God and keep His commandments have in it the definite assurance of mercy to be shown them, and could not come, therefore, under the contradictory law of inheriting their father's sins.

This is quite plain as to the law. But it may be argued, Is there not a testimony of fact, however, which we cannot help taking as an interpretation of the commandment? Is there not a law of heredity entailing the most serious consequences? What do we all inherit from Adam? There is but one answer to this. We certainly inherit both a sinful nature and its consequences; but the nature is not in question here. It is the penalty, of which the popular proverb here is speaking. A fallen nature we all have, truly—though we must remember that man is not as a beast to be bound by his nature, nor to be excused by it. Let a man argue as he will about what he has inherited from Adam, he knows in his own soul, as to every sin that he has committed, that he is responsible, and why he is responsible for it. He cannot put his sins to Adam's account. They are *his own*. Theology may complicate matters for him, indeed, but we are not concerned with that now—it is looked at elsewhere. (See Rom. v. 12–21, *Notes.*)

As for his [j]father, because he practised oppression, spoiled his brother by robbery, and [k]did that which is not good among his people, behold, he shall die in his iniquity.

Yet ye say, [l]Why doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done judgment and justice, hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that [m]sinneth, it shall die; the [n]son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son;

j ver. 4, etc.
k ctr. Prov. 14. 22.
l cf. Ex. 20. 5. *cf.* 2 Ki. 23. 26.
m ver. 4. *cf.* Rom. 2. 6, 11.
n Deut. 24. 16. *cf.* 2 Ki. 14. 6.

As to penalty, the apostle plainly declares that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men" (not, for that *Adam* sinned, but) "for that *all* have sinned." Any one who can say he has not sinned, may justly argue that he should be free from a penalty which comes to him simply from his fathers. But let us look at this in the light of some examples that may help us. The Christian at least is free from wrath. He is accepted in Christ before God in all the fulness of Christ's own acceptance. With regard to him the Lord distinctly states: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into *judgment* (as the word is), but is passed from death unto life" (Jno. v. 24). In *this* thought of judgment (not as the holy discipline of God with His people, as in 1 Cor. xi. 30–32, but) as true penalty, the Christian is wholly free; yet he dies as others do (unless the Lord comes before), for death came into the world through Adam. Plainly, we must carefully distinguish here. Death for the Christian has changed its character. The Lord has pronounced with regard to this that he who believeth on Him, though he were dead, yet shall live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die (Jno. xi. 25, 26). Yet we must admit a death which is the result of chastisement. Discipline, so far from being penalty merely, is that which secures our being partakers of God's holiness (Heb. xii. 10). It is a proof thus of sonship, as the apostle says.

An Old Testament example is of great value to us here. The book of Job gives an account of the trial of a man who had not his like upon the earth; a man that feared God and eschewed evil. Yet Job is permitted to be in Satan's hands in such a way that his suffering through it is proverbial. His friends argue, as men so commonly do, that this must be the visitation of God for sins in his life, thus detected and exposed, in spite of all his righteous seeming. Of the suffering there was no doubt. Of its being distinctly from God there can be no proper doubt either. Yet Job could proclaim his blameless conduct without possibility of any one controverting it. But there was another cause, which the speech of Elihu (who alone has God's mind with regard to it) brings into open view. There is often an inner condition of heart which has to be reached, and which Job's very claim of righteousness, truthful as in a sense it was, clearly manifests. He has to come where, instead of any such claim to righteousness, he can only say: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore *I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii. 5, 6).

By such examples as these we can see clearly how the fruits and consequences of sin—which is indeed penalty for the unrepentant sinner—may be found in

the °righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the ᵖwickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

3 (21-32): With the wicked returning to righteousness, or the righteous to iniquity.

3. But if the wicked ᵍturn from all his sins that he hath committed, and ʳkeep all my statutes, and do judgment and justice, he shall surely live, he shall ˢnot die. None of his transgressions which he hath committed shall be ᵗremembered against him; in his ᵘrighteousness that he hath done, he shall live. Have I any ᵛpleasure at all in the death of the wicked? saith the Lord Jehovah; and not rather in his ʷreturning from his way that he may live? But when the ˣrighteous turneth from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked doeth, shall he live? ʸNone of his righteous deeds that he hath done shall be remembered: in his unfaithfulness which he hath wrought, and in his sin which he hath sinned, in them shall he ᶻdie. And ye ᵃsay, The way of the Lord is not equal!

o 1 Ki. 8. 32. *cf.* Is. 3. 10, 11.
p Rom. 2. 9 with Rev. 20. 12, 15.
q ver. 27, etc. ch. 33. 11-16. *cf.* Is. 1. 16-20. *cf.* Is. 55. 7.
r ver. 9. *cf.* Jas. 2. 10
s vers. 17, 28. *cf.* Rom. 8. 2
t ch. 33. 16. *cf.* Ps. 25. 7. *cf.* Heb. 8. 12.
u 2 Chr. 6. 23.
v ver. 32. ch. 33. 11. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9.
w *cf.* Ps. 147 11. *cf.* Hos. 6. 1-3. *cf.* Lk. 15. 4, etc.
x ch. 3. 20, etc.; *ctr.* 1 Jno. 2. 1, 2.
y *ctr.* Jno. 10. 28-30; *cf.* Rom. 8. 31-35.
z *ctr.* Col. 3. 3, 4.
a ver. 29; ch. 33. 17, 20.

the case of the righteous. If a man like Job needed the discipline through which he passed to open his eyes to his condition—to sin in his very nature—it is plain that no one could think of being exempt from these ways of a holy and merciful God with regard to him. And proportionately as we have little knowledge of ourselves, these ways may be mysterious to us. They were surely that to Job until they found their interpretation; and it is plain that the great point through it all is, as Elihu says, to turn man from his purpose, from all his own ends and ways, and to hide pride from man. Pride is that which, above all, obscures the ways of God with us, while it necessitates a severity of trial which, arguing from the mere outward conduct, when there is even a general desire to be right with God, is hard to penetrate. Thus we can see why, in a world like this, the righteous and the wicked seem often to fare so similarly; indeed, as the psalmist thought, the wicked may get on best. He found that he must be in the sanctuary to understand this.

3. We have now another case considered; which closes the account. It is that of the sinner turning to righteousness; or, on the other hand, the turning of the righteous outwardly to sin. In either case, the judgment must be according to the end of the trial. Former sin, or former righteousness, cannot be remembered; that is, the sin of the past will not make the present righteousness to which one has turned, unavailing; nor, on the other hand, the past righteousness make the present sin to be cancelled by it. We must remember in all this that it is not the final account in eternity that is spoken of, but the present entering into the favor or under the judgment of God in government. Nor have we the grace of God's mercy, as the gospel has shown it to us, spoken of at all. It is God's ways in government that are before us, which is the constant theme of the prophet. We must remember also how, in the case of sin like David's, there might have to be, as far as outward experiences go, the remembrance of the sin, even when it had been forgiven and the soul was once more in the unclouded favor of God. The need in David's case is explicitly given to us. Because he had made the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, God

Hear, then, O house of Israel: Is not [b]my way equal? are not [c]your ways unequal? When the [d]righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth therein, in his iniquity that he hath done he shall die. And when the [e]wicked turneth from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth judgment and justice, he shall keep his soul alive. Because he [f]considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions which he hath committed, he shall certainly live, he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one [g]according to his ways, saith the Lord Jehovah. [h]Return ye, and turn from all your transgressions; and iniquity shall not be your stumbling-block. [i]Cast away from you all your transgressions wherewith ye have transgressed, and [j]make you a new heart and a new spirit: for [k]why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have [l]no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah. Therefore [m]turn ye and live.

b Gen. 18. 25. Deut. 32. 4. Zeph. 3 5.
c Ps. 50 21. *cf.* Jer. 2. 19.
d ver. 24. *cf.* Rom. 2. 7.
e ver. 21.
f ver. 14. Deut. 32.29.
g ch. 7. 3. ch. 33. 20. Eccl. 12 14
h Mal. 3. 18. Is. 31. 6, 7.
i ctr. Heb. 9. 26.
j ctr. ch. 36. 25, 26 *ctr.* Jer. 32. 39.
k ch. 33. 11. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 20.
l cf. Lk. 19. 41.
m cf. Mt. 11. 28.

must glorify Himself as to the sin, not merely on account of any disciplinary need on David's part, but because God cares for His glory among men in general. He must maintain His character, and show that He cannot pass over evil in the lives of His own people because they are that. Thus the sword was never to depart from David's house, and the sin that he had committed sprang up again and again in his own family history. How great the need that there should be no right question with regard to the holiness of Him who yet delights in mercy, abundant in goodness and in truth at the same time! But with Him, "mercy rejoiceth against judgment," and He emphatically declares, therefore, that He can have no pleasure in the death of the sinner. In fact, the nation of Israel as a whole were in such a state as necessitated judgment. The darkness over the ways of God was with them the fruit of that darkened understanding which a heart turned away from Him will surely produce; and he closes here with an earnest appeal to their conscience and heart together. *Their* ways, not His, were unequal; of necessity therefore, judgment was at hand; but still He would have them turn from all their transgressions, that they might not be to their destruction. "Cast away from you all your transgressions wherewith ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" How fully is man's responsibility for his whole condition recognized in this appeal! It is not, of course, what the Lord urged upon Nicodemus, when the new light was dawning upon him, that man must be born again; but it is responsibility pressed to the full, and man is fully recognized as one who ought to be master of himself, capable of such appeal as is made to him here: "For why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah; therefore, turn ye and live."

Sec. 6.

In this chapter we return to the lessons furnished by the history of the peo-

SECTION 6 (Chap. xix.).

The victories of the Gentiles over the line of David, so that under them Israel never obtains her hope.

AND thou, take thou up a [n]lamentation for the princes of Israel, and say, What was thy [o]mother? A lioness: she lay down among [p]lions, she nourished her whelps in the midst of the young lions. And she brought up [q]one of her whelps; it became a young lion, and he learned to catch the prey; he devoured men. And the [r]nations heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with hooks into the land of [s]Egypt. And when she saw that she had waited and her hope was lost, she took [t]another of her whelps, and made him a young lion. And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey; he devoured men. And he

n ch. 26. 17. ch. 27. 2.
o cf. ch. 16. 3. *ctr.* Gal. 4. 26, 31.
p cf. Nah. 2. 11, 12. *cf.* Gen. 49. 9, 10.
q cf. 2 Ki. 23. 31, 32. *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 1, 2.
r cf. 2 Ki. 23. 33, 34.
s cf. Jer. 22. 11, 12, 18.
t cf. 2 Ki. 23. 34–37.

ple. The prevailing of Gentile power over the line of David, spite of the promises of God given to it, is here pointed out. The hope which these promises awakened, Israel seemed not to obtain. We have not this fact merely, however, but the plain reason for it, which its very brevity makes all the more vivid. Two pictures of Israel are set side by side before us, Jerusalem and her king being the representatives of Israel; and these pictures are intended to cast light upon one another. There is a certain incongruity between them which at first sight makes the connection difficult, but which is the very point intended to be pressed. Jerusalem as the lioness among lions is the very secret of Jerusalem's present broken-down condition as God's vine.

The lamentation is over the princes of Israel; it is the kingdom that is before us, and the question is asked, "What was thy mother?" The answer is, "A lioness; she lay down among lions; she nourished her whelps in the midst of the young lions." She is a kingdom among the kingdoms of the earth, in a relation to them which makes her offspring as their offspring, and reproduces in them the Gentile characters. There is, truly, a Lion of the tribe of Judah; it is a title of Christ Himself, and He will arise in this character to put down all enemies at last by one decisive stroke. The book of Revelation shows us Christ after this manner, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. When the seer looks to see this *Lion*, however, he sees the *Lamb*. These things are not incongruous or contradictory in Him. The Lamb is His true and inner character; and all the way through it is the Lamb that is upon the throne, and it is the Lamb whose wrath is dreaded. The rod of iron, to use another figure, is in His hand; but it is the Shepherd's rod none the less. Judgment is not only in behalf of righteousness, but it is the fruit of love itself. He must manifest Himself against the enemies of His people; He must destroy those that destroy the earth.

But the lion which is spoken of here is a very different one. Indeed, Israel was nothing now but a Gentile power, with the lawlessness and selfish spirit that belongs to man in nature. Her offspring manifest this: "She brought up one of her whelps. It became a young lion, and he learned to catch prey; he devoured men." The statement is as decisive as it is short. This is not God's picture of the "Ruler amongst men," surely. It is not

knew their palaces, and laid [u]waste their cities; and the land was desolate and its fulness because of the noise of his roaring. Then the [v]nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him; he was taken in their pit and they put him in a cage with hooks, and brought him to the king of [w]Babylon; they brought him into strongholds, that his voice should [x]no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.

[u] ch. 22. 25. *cf.* Is. 1. 21-23.
[v] *cf.* 2 Ki. 24. 1-6. Jer. 22. 13-19.
[w] 2 Chr. 36. 6. *cf.* Hab. 1. 6.
[x] ch. 6. 2, 3.

David's picture in his final song; and we see how truly he realized it when he owned that his house was "not so with God." Indeed, it was not, as the disorders already manifested plainly showed; but this being so, the rule of the line of David could not justify its existence; for even God's promise would not do this apart from its possessing the characters of true rule, which it had not. Thus it directly follows that when "the nations heard of him, he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with hooks into the land of Egypt." It is the fate of Jehoahaz that is referred to; it is his history generalized for our consideration. What would people do with a man-eating lion? The pit and the hooks were the only right treatment for such.

But Jehoahaz is only one example out of many: "And when she saw that she had waited and her hope was lost, she took another of her whelps and made him a young lion; and he went up and down among the lions; he became a young lion, and learned to catch prey: he devoured men." We scarcely know whether it is Jehoachin who is spoken of here, or Zedekiah who replaced him. It is really of no consequence. In any case, it is but another lion's whelp, like the former; and as the character is like, so also must be the result.

There is some further description to bring out fully the moral of the whole. The first expression is difficult, and there is some question with regard to the text. "He knew their palaces:" more strictly perhaps, "He knew their widows;" but it may mean, rather, their solitary or widowed places or palaces. Some would read it: "He broke down their palaces," which would seem to connect better with what follows. But we have to be careful in Scripture how we take what seems simplest to be the best. The general thought, however, is plain: "He laid waste their cities, and the land was desolate and its fulness" (*i. e.*, all that was in it), "because of the noise of his roaring." His voice was evidently more pretentious than his power, but his power was enough, such as it was, to make a desolation, whereas there should have been prosperity. This repeats, therefore, only more emphatically, what was the character of these lion whelps. The consequence is that the same destruction comes upon him, only now from another side. "Then the nations set themselves against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him. He was taken in their pit, and they put him into a cage with hooks, and brought him" (this time) "to the king of Babylon. They brought him into strongholds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel." This would make it look more like Zedekiah, the last king; but in any case it is the justification of the Gentile overthrow of David's house, and it is a complete one. It may be said, of course, that these Gentiles were none of them any better. The answer is plain, that Israel, with all her privileges and her knowledge of God, should have been better; and that the profession of this knowledge could

Thy mother [y]like thee is as a vine planted by the waters: it was fruitful and full of branches by [z]reason of many waters. And it had strong [a]rods for sceptres of them that bare rule, and its stature was [b]exalted among the thick boughs; and it was conspicuous by its height with the multitude of its branches. But it was [c]plucked up in fury, it was cast down to the ground, and the east wind [d]dried up its fruit; its strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them. And now it is planted in the wilderness, in a [e]dry and thirsty land: and the [f]fire is gone out of a rod of its branches, it hath devoured its fruit; so that there is in it no strong rod to be a sceptre for ruling. This is a [g]lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

y ch. 17. 6, etc. Is. 5. 1-4. *cf.* Mt. 21. 33-41.
z Deut. 8. 7-9. Ps. 80. 8-11.
a *cf.* ch. 21. 10, 13. *cf.* Ezra 4. 20.
b *cf.* ch. 31. 3.
c *cf.* Ps. 80. 12, 13, 16. *cf.* Jer. 31. 28.
d *cf.* Jer. 4. 11, 12. *cf.* Hos. 13. 15.
e *cf.* Ps. 63. 1. *cf.* Hos. 2. 3.
f *cf.* Judg. 9. 15. *cf.* Jer. 52. 3.
g ver. 1; *cf.* Lam. 4. 20.

not possibly be permitted to dishonor God, accompanied, as it was, with the full heathen character.

This ends the first picture. Now, in opposition to this, we have what Israel should have been, what it was in the mind of God according to the place in which He had set it for Himself upon the earth. Here the address is, one would say, to Zedekiah: "Thy mother like thee is as a vine planted by the waters." That seems the most probable rendering of another difficult expression. Naturally, the mother was like her offspring in character; but that is not the point here: it is *place*, not character; and the place of the king in Israel was to exhibit rightly the character corresponding to the place which God had given to the nation, the mass of which had departed from Him. Ezekiel, as Isaiah also, had already used the same figure, reminding us of fruitfulness as the only purpose of a vine, of its weakness and dependence. It was in this weakness that Israel would find her strength; it was in drawing from the one Source of all blessing that all her fruitfulness was to be found; and God had in Israel's case done all that could be done in this respect. For a short time, intermittently, it was fruitful; but, by reason of many waters with which God had encompassed it, it grew strong rods for sceptres of them that bare rule, and its stature was exalted among the thick boughs, and it became conspicuous by its height with the multitude of its branches. That is all that is said as to its condition; but we have had abundance heretofore to show that, whilst in weakness she was to find strength, she turned her very blessings, alas, into instruments for her weakness.

These strong rods for sceptres were indeed conspicuous in such times as those of David and Solomon, when the kingdom stretched from the Edomite Gulf to the Euphrates; but it was at this very time that the seed was being sown of the disasters which were soon to follow. The idolatry under Solomon blasted it at once; and though God indeed bore with them in long patience, so that the history of the divided kingdom was prolonged for centuries, yet it forebode the end as a sure thing, and it came at last: "It was plucked up in fury, it was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up its fruit; its strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them." So much wood, useful for nothing else when the fruit was gone, as already shown—was proper fuel for the fire. Israel still remained, but in how different a condition! "And now it is planted in the wilderness in a dry and thirsty land, and the fire is

SUBDIVISION 3 (Chaps. xx.–xxiv.).

The full exposure of the people's sin, the heart laid bare.

SECTION 1 (Chap. xx. 1-44).

Rebellion from the beginning hitherto, though still God's purpose as to them abides.

1 (1-9): In Egypt, their birth land.

1. And it came to pass in the [h]seventh year, in the fifth [month], the tenth of the month, that certain of the [i]elders of Israel came to inquire of Jehovah, and they sat before me. And the [j]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Is it to inquire of me that ye are come? [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will [k]not be inquired of by you. Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou

h *cf.* ch. 1. 2. ch. 8. 1, etc.
i ch. 14. 1. ch.33.30-33.
j ch.18.1,etc.
k ch. 14. 3. *cf.* 2 Ki.3.13. ver. 31.

gone out of a rod of its branches" (Zedekiah seems clearly intimated here), "it hath devoured its fruit, so that there is in it no strong rod to be a sceptre for ruling." The kingdom had passed—passed with every hope that could be grounded upon man as man. It had passed in the righteous judgment of God upon it; and yet who can forbear to mourn for the blighting? "This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation."

We have thus reached already the close of this sad history. The last section here, extended beyond what is usual, gives us the summary of it all before the final judgment, which we reach in the last chapter of this division, where the siege of the city by Nebuchadnezzar is announced as having begun, and closes therefore the first division of the prophecy.

SUBDIVISION 3.

Sec. 1.

We have now, therefore, their history given from the beginning. We have had it already in various aspects, but here it is shown how consistent, alas, had been the conduct of the people from their very birth as a nation in Egypt to the present time. Constant grace had been shown them; on their part constantly resisted, and thus made ineffectual. Still the purpose of that grace abides, as we see in the end here. God would not leave His gracious purpose to end in failure, whatever may be man's sin against it. Once more, therefore, we are reminded that the promise abides, and that God will perform it in His own wonderful way.

1. We have a new date now, which is significant. "It came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of Jehovah, and they sat before me." This seventh year with the numbers of responsibility attaching to the month and day, with which we are already familiar, naturally connects itself with the subject before us. We have once more a deputation of elders to inquire of Jehovah, and once again their inquiry is unanswered—it is not even uttered, one would say. They represent, as we see by their inquiry, the professed orthodoxy of the people of whom they are the leaders. But God has nothing to say to them; that is, He has nothing that will answer to their expectations.

judge them? Cause them to know the [l]abominations of their fathers and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day [m]when I chose Israel, and lifted up my hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the [n]land of Egypt, when I lifted up my hand unto them, saying, I am Jehovah your God, in that day I lifted up my hand unto them to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had [o]espied for them, flowing with [p]milk and honey, which is the [q]glory of all lands; and I said unto them, [r]Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God. But they [s]rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: none of them cast away the abominations of his eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said,

l ch. 16. 2. *cf.* Mt. 12. 38, 39.
m Ex. 6. 7. Ex. 19. 4-6. Deut. 4. 37. Is. 41. 8, 9.
n Ex. 4. 31. Ex. 20. 2, 3. Deut. 4. 34.
o Deut. 8. 7-9. Deut. 11. 11, 12.
p Ex. 13. 5, etc.
q Ps. 48. 2. Dan. 8. 9.
r cf. Ex. 13. 5-7. *cf.* Josh. 24. 23. ch. 18. 31.
s cf. Deut. 9. 7. *cf.* Neh. 9. 16-18.

They are looking for good, and there is nothing but evil that can be announced to them. They fully represent those fathers who, according to the current proverb, had set their teeth on edge; and the prophet is commissioned only to set before them the way in which they were repeating their fathers' abominations. We cannot but remember how in the Lord's time, the scribes and Pharisees were pleading, in the same way as was done here, their right of exemption from the judgment coming for their fathers' deeds, and how the Lord meets them at that time: "Ye are witnesses," He says, "that ye are the children of them who killed the prophets. Fill ye up, then, the measure of your fathers" (Matt. 23: 31, 32).

What is most manifest here is the moral unity of the generations which succeeded one another. There is a perfect monotony of evil all the way through, from the nation's birth in Egypt to Ezekiel's time, and nothing else can be expected until God acts in the sovereignty of His own grace, at last to fulfil His promises in spite of this continuous rebellion.

The elders here are not spoken of as the same company that had previously come to inquire of the prophet, but they are met in the same way, for there is no moral difference. God will not suffer any more inquiry from them. What right have they to inquire, when the terms upon which He alone can be with them have been fully before them, so continually pressed upon them also by the voices of the prophets whom God raised up, and violated all the time? Their own consciences would witness that their hearts were untrue in the inquiry itself. There was no need, therefore, but to remind them of their fathers' abominations: they would find in them a mirror of their own. For this cause the long history is brought before them, beginning from the time God had chosen them, making Himself known in the land of Egypt, to bring them out of it into the land He had selected for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands. But they were all defiled with the abominations of Egypt, and God had warned them from the outset that these must be put away. Yet with His judgments upon the gods of Egypt before their very eyes, they had not put them away; so that in Egypt itself He had threatened to pour out His wrath upon them. What an inside picture of the condition of things already in the people whom His grace was taking up! Yet He had taken them up, and for His name's sake still wrought, that it should not be

I will [t]pour out my wrath so as to accomplish mine anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for my [u]name's sake that it should not be profaned in the [v]sight of the nations among whom they were, in whose sight I had made myself known unto them in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

2 (10-27): On the way.

2. So I caused them to go [w]forth out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my [x]statutes, and made known unto them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall [y]live by them. And I also gave them my [z]sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah who sanctify them. But the house of Israel [a]rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they rejected my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live by them; and my sabbaths they greatly profaned: then I said, I will pour out my wrath upon them in the [b]wilderness to consume them. But I wrought for my [c]name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. Moreover also

t vers. 13, 21.

u vers. 14, 22. *cf.* Ex. 32. 12. *cf.* Num. 14. 13-16. *cf.* Josh. 7. 9.

v *cf.* Josh. 2. 10. *cf.* Josh. 9. 9, 10.

w Ex. 13. 17, 18.

x Ex. 20. 1, etc. *cf.* Deut. 4. 8.

y Lev. 18. 5. *cf.* Lk. 10. 28. *cf.* Gal. 3. 12, 21.

z *cf.* Gen. 2. 3. *cf.* Ex. 16. 29. Ex. 20. 8-11, etc.

a *cf.* Ex. 16. 28. *cf.* Deut. 9. 12-24.

b *cf.* Ex. 32. 10. *cf.* Num. 16. 20, 21.

c vers. 9, 22.

profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they were, with whom God was dealing through them, and with purposes of mercy towards those also who might listen to His powerful voice. Israel was thus a witness of the living God, proclaiming Himself in the sight of all in bringing them out of the land of Egypt.*

2. The wilderness begins another portion of their history; yet how thoroughly it resembled that which had come to an end! What deliverances God had wrought for them; how thoroughly He had declared Himself to them. Question there could not be, one would say, as to the power or grace of One who was among them, making Himself known in constant miracles. Yet it is not of these that He speaks here, but rather of the statutes and judgments which He had given them, which pointed to the way of life. His sabbaths were the seal upon all these, a sign between God and them of the rest which He designed for them. Not a hard taskmaster was He, but their gracious Deliverer: He ever would point them to the rest, for themselves and the very cattle with them, the memorial of that creation-rest when, satisfied with the perfect goodness of all that He had created, Himself rested. But man's sin had soon broken in upon it, and they continually repeated this: "They walked not in my statutes, and they rejected my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live by them; and my sabbaths they greatly profaned." Thus again, as in His words to Moses, He had to threaten them with the wrath which could so easily

* It is to be remembered that in all this historical review of Israel's sin, God's controversy with them is not primarily for their sinful *acts*, but for that which lay at the root of all those acts—their apostasy from Him, and their idolatry. All else is the fruit of this. So it ever is: sin, in principle, is departure from God, a departure which produces actual transgressions. So God wrought for the glory of His name, and will eventually magnify that name, in the recovery of the apostate, but finally penitent people. The chapter is strikingly correspondent to chapter 16.—S. R.

I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would [d]not bring them into the land that I had given [them], flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands; because they [e]rejected my judgments and walked not in my statutes and profaned my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols. Nevertheless mine eye [f]spared them so as not to destroy them, neither did I make a full end of them in the wilderness. And I said unto their [g]children in the wilderness, Walk not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I am Jehovah your God: walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them and sanctify my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am Jehovah your God. But the [h]children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall live by them; they profaned my sabbaths: and I said I would pour out my [i]wrath upon them to accomplish mine anger against them in the wilderness. Nevertheless I withdrew my hand, and wrought for my [j]name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations in whose sight I had brought them forth. I lifted up my

d Num. 14. 23-30. Num. 26. 64, 65. Ps. 95. 11. *cf.* Heb. 3. 11, 18.
e cf. Ex. 32. 1-8. *cf.* Num. 15. 39. *cf.* Acts 7. 39 43.
f Ps. 78. 37, 38. *cf.* Neh. 9. 19.
g Num. 32. 13-15. Deut. 4. 3-6. Ps. 78. 6-8.
h Num. 21. 5. Deut. 9. 23, 24. Ps. 106. 29-33, etc.
i vers. 8, 13. *cf.* 2 Chr. 34. 21, 25.
j vers. 9, 14. *cf.* Ps. 25. 11.

have consumed them; but still His mercy held back the merited reward of their sins, and again it was for His name's sake that He wrought, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations before whose eyes He had brought them out. How much depended upon the preservation of the witness of what He was amid the idols with which everywhere men had surrounded themselves!

But God could not bring, as He had been ready to bring, that generation into the land which He had promised them; for their hearts yet were after the idols they had seen smitten by Him blow after blow. How useless that man's mind should be convinced when his heart is deliberately astray! God's eye had spared them so as not to destroy them, not to make a full end of them in the wilderness; and once again He took their children by the hand, saying: "Walk not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am Jehovah your God;" but was answered after their former manner. They again refused the statutes which commended themselves to their consciences. They profaned the sabbaths, the sign of the rest which He desired for them; and even before the land was reached, He had again to threaten them with the wrath which love and pity held back from a people who were to be the bearers of His name before the nations; for how could He destroy that which alone remained as a witness at all? Yet, through all that time, as the prophet Amos bears distinct witness, they deserted Him for the false gods around them. His own words by the prophet appeal to them: "Have ye offered unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? Nay, ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts" (Amos v. 25–27).

hand also unto them in the wilderness, that I would [k]scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries; because they had not executed my judgments, but had rejected my statutes, and profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. And I also gave them [l]statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; and I polluted them with their own gifts, in that they caused to [m]pass through [the fire] all that opened the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end they might know that I am Jehovah. Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, in this moreover have your fathers blasphemed me, in that they have wrought [n]unfaithfully against me.

3 (28, 29): In the land.

3. When I had [o]brought them into the land which I had lifted up my hand to give them, then they saw every high hill and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the [p]provocation of their offering: there also they presented their sweet savor* and they poured out there their drink offerings. And I said unto them, What is the [q]high place whither ye go? And the name thereof is called Bamah† unto this day.

k Lev. 26. 33. Deut. 28. 64-68. Ps. 106. 27. Jer. 15. 4.

l *cf.* ver. 39. *cf.* Deut. 4. 27, 28 *cf.* Deut. 28. 36. *cf.* Ps. 81. 12. *cf.* Is. 66. 4. *cf.* Rom. 1. 21, etc.

m *cf.* 2 Ki. 17. 17, etc. *cf.* ch. 16. 20, 21.

n *cf.* Jer. 32. 35 with Ex. 32. 7, 8. *cf.* Ps. 78. 57.

o *cf.* Josh. 23. 3, 4, 14. *cf.* Neh. 9. 22 26. *cf.* Ps. 78. 55-58.

p *cf.* ch. 8. 3.

q *cf.* ch. 16. 24, 25, 31.

* Lit., "savor of rest," as in Gen. 8: 21.
† Lit., "high place," as in the previous clause.

Thus the wilderness had decided as to the issue which only now in Ezekiel's time was becoming history; and since they had rejected His statutes, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols, He had to "give them," as in strong language He puts it here—give them over to "statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live:" that is, give them over to statutes of the heathen around them, as we see immediately when He adds: "And I polluted them with their own gifts in that they caused to pass through the fire all that opened the womb" (every first-born whom the Lord had sanctified to Himself), "that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am Jehovah." People ask still for evidences of Christianity, as if God had not been heaping evidence upon evidence; and here was a people before whose eyes were constant miracles, which forbade men to doubt the reality and power of their Deliverer, yet the answer given to Him was only in unfaithfulness and blasphemy.

3. There is but a glance at their history in the land. What would come upon them, as we have seen, was already pronounced; and this in itself declared what would be their conduct, which God foresaw. Fresh privileges would be only fresh opportunity for evil; and the high hills of the land to which they were now brought, and the trees which showed its fertility, became for them the places of idolatrous resort where they lifted up, professedly to Him, offerings that provoked Him, or would fain have hid amongst the trees the sin from which they could not be divorced. Their sweet savor was for others than Himself. Their drink-offerings of joy became but drunken revels in honor of their multitudinous deities. This worship in the high places had left its marks

4 (30-38): The wilderness of the peoples.

4. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Do ye pollute yourselves after the [r]manner of your fathers, and do ye [s]commit fornication after their abominations? And when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to [t]pass through the fire, do ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day, and [u]shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will [v]not be inquired of by you. And that which

r Judg. 2. 19. Jer. 7. 26.
s cf. Rev. 2. 14. *cf.* ch. 16. 15.
t cf. Deut. 18. 10. 12. Jer. 19. 5.
u ver. 3. ch. 14. 3, 4. *cf.* 2 Ki. 3. 13, 14. *cf.* Mt. 12. 38, 39.
v cf. Zech. 7. 13; *cf.* Is. 1. 15.

upon the land in the very names by which they were known. Thus everywhere, upon the face of the country and the city alike, they had written out their sentence.

4. As to all their history, therefore, there was nothing more to say. Reformations attempted here and there by some of their kings, and all that was accomplished by the prophets whom God had raised up amongst them, altered in no wise the character of things below the surface. What a witness against man it is! And the history of the Church on earth has still been a viler history, when we think of the higher privileges perverted, and the sweeter communications of God's grace—a grace now fully declared. We are to-day, as a mass, just where Ezekiel was in his day, although we may hide it from ourselves, as they would fain have hidden it also. A spiritual captivity may be more easily denied, of course, than their external one; but "as in water face answereth face, so the heart of man to man." We may worship silver and gold still, while we do not make it into the hideous shapes which once were made. We may civilize and refine, while altering nothing as to the terrible reality of hearts that are away from God; and we are surely now, at the very end, face to face with an impending judgment to which Scripture bears fullest witness. An outbreak of evil is at hand which will fill the world once more with a darkness of which the prophets of Israel bore witness: "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples"—and this at the time when it is said as to Israel, "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isa. lx. 2).

We have cause, therefore, to enter into the feelings of the prophet as God's voice denounces those who, with the light that He had given them, deliberately preferred darkness, who said: "We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries in serving wood and stone." They had plenty of evidence of this before their eyes; but whatever presents itself as a hiding from God has always been, alas, acceptable to those whose hearts wander from Him. If He reigns at all, it must be in power, therefore: "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out will I reign over you. And I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out from the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an out-stretched arm, and with wrath poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face." Here we are plainly carried on to what is still future. They are now indeed scattered in the countries and among many peoples, yet they are with reviving hope turning once more to the land which God is indeed keeping vacant for them, expecting to find quiet possession, to obtain it as a mere matter of merchandise and by successful politics. But that is not what

cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be [w]as the nations, as the families of the countries, in serving wood and stone. [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a [x]mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, will I reign over you. And I will [y]bring you out from the peoples, and will [z]gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out; and I will [a]bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face. Like as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the [b]wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will cause you to [c]pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the [d]covenant. And I will

w *cf.* 1 Sam. 8. 5.
cf. Deut. 7. 3–5.
x ch. 8. 18.
cf. Jer. 21. 5.
y ch. 34. 13.
cf. Is 27. 13
z *cf.* Lev. 26. 45.
cf. Jer 32. 37.
cf. Jer. 31. 10.
a *cf.* ch. 38. 8.
cf. Hos. 2. 14.
cf. Jer. 2. 9, 35.
b *cf.* Ex. 32. 30, etc.
cf. Num. 11. 1, etc.
c Lev. 27. 32.
cf. Jer. 33. 13.
cf. Matt. 25. 32, 33.

d *cf.* ch. 16. 59, 60; *cf.* Ps. 89. 31-34; *cf.* Jer. 31. 31-34.

God has in mind for them; for the record of their history has yet to be faced, and that record, unrepented of, can only be faced in judgment.

Thus, God will gather out, but only into a condition of things such as when He brought Jacob their father out of Padan-aram to meet the consequences of the sin which had driven him there, and for which, if God is to interfere for him, He must wrestle with him Himself. Thus Peniel must be known by the nation also before they can know Bethel. And "like as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah; and I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant."

It is for mercy, and yet through judgment; for mercy will once more rejoice against judgment. But the judgment must itself do a necessary work: "I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that trangress against Me, and I will bring them forth out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah." This is not, of course, the whole history of the people in that day soon to come. There will be those who doubtless will return to their land and get a certain possession of it for a while, but only to end in a worse condition than ever, as they yield themselves to an idolatry more terrible than all that has been seen among them yet. People may scout even the possibility of this, while false christs and false prophets are everywhere rising up, leading men captives with unblushing delusions.

We do not enter into the details here, which the book of Daniel is to bring fully before us; but the issue is given by the prophet Isaiah in words that cannot be mistaken, except wilfully. Thus he speaks: "In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." There is no room to say that this has been fulfilled in any time of their previous history, for the prophet

[e] purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall [f] not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall [g] know that I am Jehovah.

5 (39-44): The end in the strong hand of Jehovah.

5. As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Go ye, [h] serve every one his idols henceforth also, for* none of you will hearken unto me; but profane my [i] holy name no more with your gifts and your idols. For in my holy [j] mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah, there shall [k] all the house of Israel serve me, the whole of it in the land; there will I [l] accept them, and there will I require your heave offerings and the first fruits of your offerings, with all your holy things. As a [m] sweet savor will I accept you when I bring you out from the peoples, and [n] gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be [o] sanctified in you in the sight of the nations. And ye shall [p] know that I am Je-

* Or, "if."

e *cf.* ch. 34. 17, 20. *cf.* Amos 9. 9, 10. *cf.* Zech. 13. 8, 9. *cf.* Mal. 4. 1-3.
f *cf.* Num. 14. 28 30. *cf.* Ps. 95. 11. *cf.* Jer. 44. 14. *cf.* Is. 65. 12-15.
g ch. 6. 7, etc.
h *cf.* Jer. 10. 14. *cf.* Ps. 81. 12. *cf.* Hos. 4. 17. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 11.
i *cf.* Is. 1. 13. *cf.* Jer. 7. 9-11. *cf.* Zeph. 1. 4-6. *cf.* Hos. 2. 16, 17.
j *cf.* Ps. 2. 6. *cf.* Is. 2. 2, 3. *cf.* Jer. 31. 12. *cf.* Joel 3.

17, 18. *k cf.* ch. 37. 22-28; *cf.* Is. 11. 13; *cf.* Jer. 3. 18; *cf.* Rom. 11. 26. *l cf.* Is. 56. 7; *cf.* Is. 60. 7; *cf.* Mal. 3. 3, 4. *m cf.* Lev. 1. 9, 13, 17; *ctr.* ch. 6. 13; *ctr.* ch. 16. 19; *ctr.* ver. 28. *n* ch. 11. 17; ch. 34. 13; ch. 36. 24; Is. 27. 12, 13. *o* ch. 28. 22, 25; *cf.* Is. 5. 16; *cf.* Lev. 10. 3. *p* vers. 38, 44, etc.

goes immediately on to what is certainly still future: "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion and upon her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (Isa. iv. 2-6). To the time pictured here, Ezekiel will bring us before his prophecy is run out. Here what we have is the intervening judgment, the judgment which has scattered and will scatter, the judgment which has overturned and will overturn, "until He come whose right it is," and the kingdom shall be His to whose hands it belongs.

5. Even here a brief glance is permitted forward at the blessing that shall be. Israel is dismissed, as it were, for the time present, to go and serve every one his idols as he lists. Only, let them do it openly, and not with the profanation of His holy name as attached to it. For once again God will, and finally, sanctify His name, and that in the grace which is His, and which we cannot wonder at when we know how it has dealt with ourselves: "For in my holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel" (that is, when the mountain of the house shall finally be lifted up, and exalted above the top of the mountains, as God has declared, Isa. ii. 2), "there shall all the house of Israel serve Me—the whole of it, in the land. There will I accept them, and there will I require your heave offerings and the firstfruits of your offerings, with all your holy things. As a sweet savor will I accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered, and am sanctified in you in the sight of the nations." Yes, if He is sanctified in judgment first, as He must be, yet will He only be sanctified fully in blessing, as becomes Him. What a time when the people who

hovah, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country which I [q]lifted up my hand to give your fathers. And there ye shall [r]remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have polluted yourselves; and ye shall [s]loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils which ye have committed. And ye shall [t]know that I am Jehovah, when I have wrought with you for my [u]name's sake, [v]not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.

q ver. 5, etc.
r ch. 16. 61. ch. 36. 31. *cf.* Ps. 126.
s *cf.* Jer. 31. 18. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 11.
t ver. 38, etc.
u Ps. 79. 9. *cf.* Ps. 115. 1. 2.
v Ps. 103. 10. Ezra 9. 13. *cf.* Deut. 7. 7, 8.

SECTION 2 (Chaps. xx. 45-xxi. 32).

The sword upon the righteous and the wicked.

1 (45-49). Against those who have had the light.

1. And the [w]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, [x]set thy face toward the south,* and drop [thy word] toward the south,† and prophesy against the forest of the south‡ field; and say to the forest of the south, [y]Hear the word of Jehovah: Thus saith the

w ch. 21. 1, etc.
x ch. 4. 3, 7. ch. 25. 2. Jer. 26. 11, 12. Amos 2. 4, 6.
y Amos 7. 16. ch. 36. 1.

* Lit., "right." † Lit., "bright." ‡ Lit., "dry." These are three different words—all meaning "south."

have been His witnesses in spite of themselves, in all the scattering by which they have fulfilled the words of their ancient prophets, and still by their preservation in which is contemplated the mercy that awaits them! "And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country which I lifted up my hand to give to your fathers; and there ye shall remember your ways and all your doings wherein ye have polluted yourselves, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils which ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah."

This, then, is how the story ends. There is no triumph of man in it, but there is the triumph of God's own sovereign grace. The view of their history given here is morally complete. We have not details, but for its purpose what is more suited, the character of that history as a whole. Whatever the individual exceptions, and the superficial and momentary revivals which we know have been, God has not yet interpreted by the event what He means by working for His name's sake. Then His name, so long profaned, shall be indeed honored, according to the psalmist's words of praise, anticipating those of the nation: "Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him" Ps. lxvii. 6, 7).

Sec. 2.

We are nearing the end of all this part of Ezekiel—the first Division. There is little more now than the reiterated announcement of judgment, which in the last chapter, the 24th, we see begun. Nebuchadnezzar has there begun the siege of the city, which we see him here contemplating. And with this commencement of what the prophet has announced, the word for the present ceases. There is no need and no use in any further announcement. The chapter before

Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will kindle the [z]fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be [a]quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned thereby. And all [b]flesh shall see that I Jehovah have kindled it; it shall not be quenched. Then said I, Ah, Lord Jehovah, they say of me, Is he not a speaker of [c]parables?

z ch. 15. 6, 7. ch. 19. 14. Jer. 21. 14.
a *cf.* Is. 66. 24. *cf.* Mk. 9. 43-49.
b Deut. 29. 24 28. *cf.* Is. 26 11 *cf.* Jer. 40. 2, 3.
c *cf.* ch. 33. 32.

cf. Mt. 13. 13, 14; *cf.* 1 s. 78. 2, 3.

us shows the sword in Nebuchadnezzar's hand as God's judgment upon the land, a judgment so complete that it sweeps away the righteous and the wicked together; that is, the whole land was desolate. It is not meant that there is no discrimination between the righteous and the wicked, for this would contradict what we have had explicitly in a previous chapter as to the seal put upon those who sighed and cried before God for the abominations of the people, and who are, therefore, by this seal itself, put explicitly under the care of God whom they have honored. Nevertheless, the land is swept bare; the righteous and wicked suffer together in this respect. The sword is upon both; only, as we have already seen, and as is simple enough, that which is pure judgment for the one class is only a refining fire for the other, and God is in it carefully superintending the process which is to bring forth a perfect vessel for Himself.

1. First of all, it is insisted that one common doom is to envelop the whole of the land. God will be true to His own, but they cannot save from destruction that which is already devoted to it. God's wrath is as a devouring fire, which lays hold of all that is before it, and that is the first point. "The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face towards the south" in which Judah and Jerusalem were), "and drop thy word towards the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field." According to the idea here given, the cultivated "field" has, as it were, grown wild, grown into a forest, as we know was the case with Judah. (For a similar thought, the meaning of Kirjath-Jearim, "the city of the woods," may be compared in Josh. xv: 9. See *Notes.*) In such a case, the very fertility of the ground, and the care that may once have been bestowed upon it, only helps the luxuriance of the wild growth. It is the common story of perverted privileges and blessing of every kind. Thus the prophet is to address himself to "the forest of the south." God is bringing a fire upon it, which is of course the symbol of His wrath, although the wrath must in a sense be discriminative, which the fire is not. This is not a contradiction, however. The external calamity reaches all alike, and the green tree suffers with the dry, but God knows how to turn the suffering itself into blessing for His people, which eternity shall reveal; and in spite of all, as He has Himself said, the man that doeth righteousness shall live thereby.

But a flame is devouring the land from south to north. Why the direction here, when the inroad of the enemy was from north to south? It would seem that what is intimated is, what was according to the fact, that the destruction of Jerusalem would scatter the people mainly northward, as it did, and would follow them there.* It was to be the unmistakable evidence of God's own

* The south was the place of light—under the sun—of privilege, and if the privileges of the light were not used, they became means of dryness. So the various words for "south" indicate the failure to enjoy privilege, and thus "I will curse your blessings" is fulfilled.

2 (xxi. 1-7). Against Jerusalem and the Land's house.

2. And the [d]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy [e]face toward Jerusalem, and drop [thy word] toward the [f]sanctuaries, and prophesy against the land of Israel; and say to the land of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah: Behold, I am [g]against thee, and will draw forth my [h]sword out of its sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked. Seeing that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of its sheath against [i]all flesh from the south to the north; and all flesh shall know that I Jehovah have drawn forth my sword out of its sheath: it shall not return any more. [j]Sigh then, thou son of man, with breaking of the loins and with bitterness, sigh before their eyes. And it shall be, when they say unto thee, [k]Wherefore dost thou sigh? that thou shalt say, Because of the tidings, for it cometh; and every heart shall melt, and all [l]hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall dissolve into water: behold, it [m]cometh; it is even here, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[d] ver. 8, etc.
[e] ch. 20. 46.
[f] *cf.* ch. 9. 6. *cf.* Mt. 23. 38
[g] *cf.* ch. 6. 11-14. *cf.* ch. 26. 3. *ctr.* Rom. 8. 31.
[h] ch. 5. 2, 12. Is. 34. 5, 6. *cf.* Rev. 1. 16.
[i] ch. 20. 47.
[j] ver. 12. Is. 22. 4. Jer. 9. 1, 17-21. *cf.* Lk. 19. 41.
[k] ch. 12. 9-11.
[l] *ctr.* Is. 35. 3. *cf.* Jer. 50. 43.
[m] ch. 7. 2, 3, etc.

judgment. God was to be glorified in it when His people were not glorifying, but dishonoring Him. The speech of the prophet, however, is as the people urge, in parables. God was dealing with them after their own fashion, for His plainest warnings had been but words to them; and, shut up in their own unbelief, there seemed no use in speaking more plainly. The ear that was opened would hear; and if it were realized that Jehovah was speaking, the very language of parable would only invite the more to search into the meaning of it.

2. Nevertheless, the word of Jehovah answers the voice of the people, and Ezekiel is instructed to speak plainly, to set his face towards Jerusalem, and drop his word toward the holy places, which, of course, were that no more, but only the witness against those who had destroyed them by their desecration. The prophecy is now to the whole land, and God says plainly that the sword, which they might then see drawn out of its sheath, was the sword of no mortal enemy merely, but His own; and as the fire devoured the green wood and the dry, so He would cut off out of the land the righteous and the wicked. The judgment was, as already declared, to be plainly *His* judgment. And if we follow Daniel to the court of the king of Babylon, we shall see how God took care to make known, in such a way that the heathen himself had to acknowledge it, His power and majesty, whose sanctuaries Nebuchadnezzar might seem to have overthrown. The king of Babylon was, as the chapter itself declares plainly, but an instrument in the hands of the Almighty who wielded all the power which Nebuchadnezzar would naturally ascribe to himself. In fact it was this which brought judgment upon him—a judgment which humbled his heart and brought him fully to own the Most High God, while the hearts of His own people remained intractable and rebellious. But it is not without sorrow,

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The fire begins in the south, the place of privilege. "Begin at my house," and it reaches northward, to the mass of the people until all are consumed.—S. R.

3 (8-17). Wrath fully displayed.

3. And the [n] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord:* Say, A sword, a [o] sword is sharpened, and also furbished: it is [p] sharpened for sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter. Shall we then make [q] mirth, [saying], The sceptre of my son [r] despiseth all wood? And he hath given it to be furbished that it may be [s] taken into the hand: the sword—it is sharpened, yea, it is furbished to give it into the hand of the [s] slayer. [u] Cry and wail, son of man: for it shall be against [v] my people, it is against all the [w] princes of Israel: they are given up to the sword along with my people; [x] smite, therefore, upon the thigh. For the trial [is made]; and what if even the [y] sceptre that despiseth shall be no more? saith the Lord Jehovah. And thou, son of

n vers. 1, etc.
o vers. 3, 15, 28. Deut. 32. 41, 42. cf. Is. 66. 16.
p cf. Ps. 7. 11-13. cf. Is. 27. 1. cf. Is. 34. 5, 6
q cf. Is. 5. 12-14. cf. Is. 22. 12-14. cf. Amos 6. 3-7. cf. Lk. 21. 34, 35.
r cf. vers. 25-27. cf. Rev. 18. 7. cf. Is. 47. 8. cf. Zeph. 2. 15.
s cf. Deut. 32. 41. cf. Is. 10. 5.

* "Adonai."

t cf. ver. 19; cf. Ps. 17. 13, 14. u ver. 6, etc. v cf. ch. 9. 6; cf. Amos 3. 2. w cf. vers. 25-27. x Jer. 31. 19. y cf. Gen. 49. 10 with ver. 27.

such as He never hesitates to attribute to Himself, that God inflicts this inevitable chastisement; and the sighing of the prophet, even with breaking of the loins and bitterness, is but the echo of what is in the heart of Him who bids him give vent thus to his human sorrow. As of old it was said, "In all their affliction He was afflicted," so it ever is, even when He whose delights are with the sons of men has to manifest Himself against them. The tears of the Lord over Jerusalem, when He took leave of it, witness with the anguish of the prophet. Yet He who wept could not spare; and that which threatened now would melt the heart and enfeeble the hands and make every spirit faint; and it was already upon them: "It cometh, it is even here, saith the Lord Jehovah."

3. Still, we have to be reminded once more of what is involved in this. It is not simply the judgment of a people, but of a people with whom were the promises of God; and it is this which for the time sets aside those promises, that they cannot be fulfilled. The sons of David, however much in rebellion against God, had nevertheless built themselves up in pride upon these very promises; and the heart of the righteous might plead with Him: Was He going to permit that the sweet assurances He had given be made void? Might they make mirth and say, as if from God's side of things, "The sceptre of my Son despiseth every tree?"* Could it not make light of all human power, however firmly rooted, which would set itself in opposition against it? "The sceptre of my Son" shows the thought implied. Was it not, according to the second psalm, the One who could declare the decree that Jehovah had said to Him, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee," who was appointed to rule upon God's holy hill of Zion, and the very ends of the earth were to be given into His hands? And had it not been said in older prophecy, that the sceptre

* "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh"; God's sceptre, held by His Son, would lay low every thing that exalted itself against Him, would bring down the high tree and dry up the green tree. Hengstenberg makes this rod, despising every tree, to be the affliction which is now about to fall upon the people—so great that it eclipses ("despises") all former rods of affliction. But the explanation in the text is so lucid, appropriate and complete, that there can be little room for questioning it.—S. R.

man, prophesy and smite thy hands together; and let the sword be [z]doubled the third time: it is the sword of the slain [ones], the sword of the [a]great one slain, which penetrateth to them. That their [b]heart may melt, and their stumbling be multiplied, [c]I have set the threatening sword against all their gates. Ah! it is made to glitter, whetted for slaughter! Gather together, [d]go to the right, turn thee, go to the left, whithersoever thy face is turned; and I will smite my hands together, and I will cause my [e]wrath to rest: I Jehovah have [f]spoken.

[z] *cf.* Gen. 41. 32. *cf.* Lev. 26. 21.
[a] Is. 3. 14, 25.
[b] ver. 7. ch. 22. 14.
[c] *cf.* ver. 9 with Lev. 26. 16, etc. ch. 14. 17.
[d] *cf.* Ps. 139. 7. *cf.* Amos 9. 2.
[e] ch. 5. 13. *cf.* Deut. 28. 63. *cf.* Is. 1. 24.
[f] vers. 1, 8, etc.

should not depart from Judah and a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came? (Gen. xlix.) How simple, it seemed, to put such things together, and think of it as faith itself, to resist the conviction of coming judgment. Yet, in spite of this, the prophet affirms that it is coming. The sword of the Lord, He has made it ready, furbished and sharpened it, that it should be as fully as possible effective, and this sword was to be against this people of Jehovah, and against all the princes of Israel; princes and people alike were to be given up to the sword. Yea, the test (in the event) was even now being made; and what if this sceptre that despiseth were actually to be no more? asks the Lord Jehovah.

How readily may His people misinterpret His plain words! How ready are we to-day to misinterpret them! How often do we hear that "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea" interpreted as being of course through the spread of Christianity—and this after nearly 2,000 years, which have manifested its incapacity to do this; and not merely this, but exhibited everywhere, as is so plain to-day, its capacity for decay—yet how many still look for this! And the very word which announces what is plainly opposite to such thoughts is made to confirm them: "*Israel* shall bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit"—and are not we Christians the true Israel?

Thus we see the heart searched out in Ezekiel's day; and here we have a glimpse, as it would seem, that we have not elsewhere, as to the perplexity which must have been in the hearts of many of such a day, faced with all those promises of triumph and blessing of which Scripture is full for them; and then, on the other hand, faced by the prophet now with this assurance of the coming desolation. But God's word abides, and time will reconcile all these things. What concerned them now was to realize the Lord's judgment upon His people, and its sure and swift coming. "Son of man, prophesy and smite thy hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time:" the strokes of it growing only the more terrible to the end—perhaps, if we are to read the number symbolically, until the time of full manifestation. This is the sword which is soon to be busy in its dreadful work, and among the slain, the "great one," the sword which has penetrated to the king himself who is the "deadly wounded." Not that Zedekiah was himself slain in the siege or after it: we know he was not. His sons were slain before his eyes, and then those eyes that had been witness of the awful sorrow were put out, that they might see the light no more. *As king*, he lived no more; and his life after that, was it life? And still the sword swept on, melting every heart and multiplying the

4 (18-23): The divination true and false.

4. And the [g] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying: And thou, son of man, set thee [h] two ways for the coming of the sword of the king of Babylon. Out of one [i] land shall they both come; and make* thee a [j] finger-post, make it at the head of the way to the city. Thou shalt set a way for the coming of the sword to [k] Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and to [l] Judah in Jerusalem the fortified. For the king of Babylon standeth at the [m] parting† of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he [n] shaketh his arrows, he inquireth of the [o] teraphim, he looketh in the [p] liver. In his right hand is the divination for [q] Jerusalem to set battering rams, to open the mouth for slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up mounds, to build forts. And this shall be a [r] false divination in their sight for them that have sworn oaths; but he bringeth the iniquity to [s] remembrance that they may be taken.

5 (24-27): Divine government waiting for Immanuel.

5. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your [t] transgressions are uncovered so that in all your doings your [u] sins appear; because that ye are come to remembrance ye shall be taken with the hand. And

* Lit., "create." † Lit., "mother."

[g] ch. 20. 45, etc.
[h] *cf.* Jer. 1. 10. ver. 20.
[i] *cf.* Jer. 25. 9.
[j] *ctr.* Jer. 31. 21.
[k] ch. 25. 5. Jer. 49. 2. Amos 1. 14
[l] *cf.* 2 Chr. 26. 9. *ctr.* Ps. 48. 12, 13.
[m] *ctr.* Josh. 24. 15.
[n] *ctr.* 1 Sam. 20. 35-39. *ctr.* 2 Ki. 13. 17.
[o] *cf.* Gen. 31. 19, 34. *cf.* Judg. 17. 5 with Judg. 18. 5, 6. *cf.* Hos 4. 12.
[p] *cf.* Is 47. 13.
[q] *cf.* ch 4. 2. *ctr.* Is. 54. 17.
[r] *cf.* Is. 28. 14, 15. *cf.* ch. 17. 13, 15, etc.
[s] *cf.* Nu. 5. 15. ch. 29. 16.
[t] *cf.* Is 3. 9. *cf.* Jer. 2. 34.
[u] *cf.* Jer. 5. 27, 28. *cf.* Hos. 4. 2. *cf.* Rom. 3. 10-18.

carcases so that men stumbled over them. And there was no escape from it: the threatening sword was against all their gates. Its very glitter was meant by God as prophesying the sure quenching in blood which was to follow. Jehovah turns to it and bids it do its work: gather up its strength, go to the right, turn to the left, finding its work unfailingly wherever it turned, for it could not miss worthy objects. And thus was Jehovah's wrath: "I will smite my hands together, and I will cause my wrath to rest. I Jehovah have spoken."

4. The next word of Jehovah contemplates more the human instrument which is implied in all this. The sword is the sword of the king of Babylon, which, even if blindly, is none the less the instrument of the Hand which is over him continually. The prophet marks his course, the path that he is to pursue. He sees him pause, and hesitate, where the one road out of his land separates into two. The one road leads to Rabbah of the Ammonite; the other to Jerusalem, strong in its fortifications. There he stands at the parting of the way, practising his vain divination, shaking his arrows, inquiring of the teraphim, looking into the liver. In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem, to lay siege to it. A poor thing in itself, against which men might build themselves up, as mere false divination of the heathen—they who had in Jehovah's name sworn faithfulness to the king of Babylon and broken their oath! All right to scorn the heathen divination, but what about Jehovah who has been scorned and defied? "He bringeth the iniquity to remembrance that they may be taken." And thus the divination does not fail.

5. Divine government has not loosed its hand upon men in all this. Nay, it is the very thing that is coming out in its full reality. The "iniquity of the

thou, the pierced-through wicked one, the [v]prince of Israel, whose day is come at the time of the iniquity of the end, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Remove the mitre, and take [w]off the crown: what is, shall be no [more]. [x]Exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high. I will [y]overturn, overturn, overturn it! This also shall be no [more] until he come whose [z]right it is; and I will give it [him].

6 (28-32): The sword upon Ammon.

6. And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning the [a]children of Ammon and concerning their reproach: and thou shalt say, A [b]sword, a sword is drawn; for the slaughter it is furbished that it may consume,* that it may glitter: whilst they see vanity for thee, whilst they [c]divine a lie unto thee, to lay thee upon the necks of the wicked that are pierced through, whose [d]day is come at the time of the iniquity of the end. Let it [e]return to its

* Or, "Sufficiently furbished that it may glitter."

v 2 Chr. 36. 11-13. ch. 17. 19, 20.
w ch. 12. 12, 13. *cf.* Jer. 13. 18.
x ch. 17. 24. Ps. 75. 7.
y *cf.* Hag. 2. 21, 22. *cf.* Heb. 12. 26, 27.
z *cf.* Ps. 2 6-8. *cf.* Heb 1. 2.
a *cf.* ch. 37. 24, 25. *cf.* Is. 9. 6, 7. *cf.* Jer. 33. 15, 16. *cf.* Dan 9. 25. *cf.* Mi. 5. 2. *cf.* Zech. 9. 9. Jer. 49. 1-5. Amos 1. 13-15. Zeph. 2. 8-10.
b vers. 9, 10.
c ch. 12. 24. ch. 22. 28. *cf.* Is 44. 25.
d ver. 25.
e *cf.* Jer. 47. 6, 7; *ctr.* 1 Chron 21. 27.

Ps. 37. 13; *cf.* Rev. 6. 17.

end" (which is bringing about the end) has taken place. The crown is gone from the head of the king of Israel, and the mitre of the high priest, which was supported by the crown, has to go also. That which still existed was to be no more. The wheel was going round! That which is low is to be exalted; that which is high is to be abased. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it," says Jehovah; "and it shall be no more until He come whose right it is, and I will give it Him." Thus there is even here a gleam through the thunder-clouds. All other hands are proved incompetent to wield this sceptre which God is taking for the time being from the line of David. There is One, however, who has right, and who will put forth His claim to it, and Judah's rod of magistracy would *not* cease until Shiloh comes. How sweet such a promise to a sorely-stricken heart! How sweet for us in our own day, revealing, as it does, the mystery of the breakdown of all things upon which we rest our human hopes, "until He comes whose right it is!" How we forget this, that the overturning is not something against *His* right, but contemplates it. Just as Israel's desolate land with all its desolation speaks of a people for whom it is waiting, in God's design, so the broken sceptre and the empty throne are only waiting for the One to come who surely will fulfil every promise, and outdo all that the heart can imagine or crave, in the blessing that He brings.

6. There is yet one final word: Ammon had escaped; the enemy of God's people had gone scot-free. The king of Babylon had turned off to Jerusalem; and the enemy now can insult them as they will. Ammon, as we know, was an ancient enemy of Israel; and, as a type, shows still more the opposition of the heart to that which is of God. We may remind ourselves how in the days of Jephthah, and afterwards in the days of Saul, Ammon stood forth under its king Nahash. "the serpent," as bent upon taking from Israel the land that was their own. (Judges xi. and 1 Sam. xi., *Notes.*) This is ever the work of the enemy of our souls—not merely to gain a victory over the people of God, but to take from them the very portion which God has given them. Israel's sins, now

sheath. In the place where thou wast created I will [f] judge thee, in the land of thy birth. And I will pour out mine [g] indignation upon thee, I will [h] blow upon thee with the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of [i] brutish men, skilful to destroy. Thou shalt be for [j] fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt [k] not be remembered: for I Jehovah have spoken.

SECTION 3 (Chap. xxii.).

The corruption in Jerusalem manifest.

1 (1-16): The causes of the judgment.

1. Moreover, the [l] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, And thou, son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the [m] bloody city? Yea, cause her to [n] know all her abominations, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: a city that [o] sheddeth blood in her midst, that her time may come, and that maketh [p] idols against herself to defile her. Thou art become [q] guilty in thy blood which thou hast shed, and hast defiled thyself with thine [r] idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy [s] days to draw near and art come unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a [t] reproach unto the nations and a mocking unto all countries. Those that are [u] near, and those that are far from thee, shall mock thee, thou infamous* one, full of tumult. Behold, the

* Lit., "unclean of name."

f cf. Gen. 15. 14. *cf.* ch. 16. 38. *cf.* Mt. 25. 31. etc.
g ch. 7. 8. ch. 22. 22. *cf.* Nah. 1. 6.
h ch. 22. 20, 21. Ps 18. 15. *cf.* Is 30 33.
i cf. ver. 19 with Is. 14. 4-6. *cf.* Jer. 4. 7. *cf.* Jer. 6. 22, 23.
j ch. 20. 47, 48. *cf.* Mal. 4. 1.
k ch. 25. 10. Zeph 2. 9.
l ch. 26. 1, etc.
m ch. 24. 6. 2 Ki. 21. 16. Jer. 2. 34. *cf.* Nah. 3. 1.
n ch. 8. 6, etc. ch. 16. 2, etc. ch. 23.
o ver. 27. ch. 24. 6 9. Zeph. 3 3.
p cf. 2 Ki. 21. 2 9. *cf.* Hos. 8. 5, 11.
q cf. Is. 1. 21-24. *cf.* Jer. 22. 17.
r cf. Ps. 106. 36-39. *cf.* Jer. 3 9.
s cf. Joel 2. 1. *cfr.* Ps. 85. 9. *t* ch. 16. 57; Deut. 28. 37; *cf.* 2 Chr. 7. 20; Ps. 44. 13, 14; Ps. 79. 4. *u cf.* Lam. 1. 12 with Obad. 10 14; *cf.* Deut. 29. 22.

at their height, bringing judgment upon them, the desolate land lay open to the attacks of the enemy. But God's eye is upon it, and Ammon is not to escape. The sword is to prove itself as Jehovah's sword in this way also. Misjudging altogether the work of God, as the enemy continually misjudges it, Ammon brings upon himself the wrath in which, as against others, he is rejoicing. "And I will blow upon thee," says the Lord, "with the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, skilful to destroy. Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt not be remembered. For I Jehovah have spoken." Thus, where all seems wreck, and what God has done for His glory seems to have fully shared in this, yet Jehovah's word stands forth unchanged in its utterance!

Sec. 3.

We return now to see once more in Jerusalem the manifest corruption which is bringing in the judgment. As has been said elsewhere, God does not judge until the corruption is fully manifest. Evil is allowed to come to its head before God smites upon it, for He will be justified in its judgment, and be clear when He is judged. What we have here, therefore, is no more history: it is not the sins of the fathers, even, as showing themselves in the children. It is the present condition of things—the causes which necessitated that which was at hand.

1. We need not spend many words upon interpretation of what is manifest.

[v] princes of Israel have been in thee to shed blood, each according to his power.* In thee have they set light by [w] father and mother; in the midst of thee have they dealt by [x] oppression with the stranger; in thee have they wronged the [y] fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised my [z] holy things, and hast profaned my [a] sabbaths. In thee have been [b] slanderous men to shed blood, and in thee have they [c] eaten upon the mountains; in the midst of thee they have committed [d] lewdness, in thee have they discovered their [e] father's nakedness; in thee have they humbled her that was [f] unclean in her separation. And one hath committed abomination with his [g] neighbor's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his [h] daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his [i] sister, his father's daughter. In thee have they taken [j] bribes to shed blood; thou hast taken [k] usury and increase, and thou hast [l] overreached thy neighbors by oppression, and hast [m] forgotten me, saith the Lord Jehovah. And behold, I have [n] smitten my hand at thine overreaching which thou hast done, and at thy bloodshed which hath been in the midst of thee. Shall thy heart [o] endure, shall thy hands be strong in the days that I shall [p] deal with thee? I Jehovah have [q] spoken, and will do it. And I will [r] scatter thee among the nations, and disperse thee through the countries, and will [s] consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt be [t] polluted through these in the sight of the nations; and thou shalt [u] know that I am Jehovah.

2 (17-22): Jerusalem the furnace of wrath.

2. And the [v] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is become [w] dross to me: they are all [x] copper, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace: they are become the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Be-

v *cf.* Mic. 3. 1-3. *cf.* Neh. 9. 34.
w Ex 21. 17. Deut. 27. 16. Prov. 20. 20. *cf.* Mt. 15. 4-6.
x *cf.* Mal. 3. 5. *cf.* Ex. 22. 21. *ctr.* Ps. 72. 4.
y Ex. 22. 22. Prov. 22. 22, 23.
z Lev. 19. 30. *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 17.
a *cf.* Amos 8. 4-6. ch. 20. 20. *cf.* Jer. 17. 21-23.
b Ex. 20. 16. *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 10-13. *cf.* Prov. 18. 8.
c ch. 18. 6, 11, 15. *cf.* Ps. 106. 28.
d ch. 16. 15, 43. ch. 24. 13.
e *cf.* Gen. 35. 22. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1.
f *cf.* Lev. 20. 18.
g Lev. 18. 20. *cf.* 2 Sam. 11. 2, 3. *cf.* Jer. 9. 2.
h Lev. 20. 12. *cf.* Gen. 38. 26.
i Deut 27. 22. *cf.* 2 Sam. 13. 1, etc.
j Deut. 27. 25. Mic. 7. 2, 3. *cf.* Mt. 26. 14-16.
k Lev. 25. 35, 36. *cf.* Ps. 15. 5. *cf.* Neh. 5. 1, 7.

* Lit., "arm."

l Prov. 1. 19; Is. 56. 11; *cf.* Lk. 18. 11. m Deut. 32. 18; Jer. 2. 32. n ch. 21. 14, 17. o ch. 21. 7; ch. 16. 30; *cf.* Job 40. 9. p Jer. 13. 21; *cf.* Jer. 12. 5. q ch. 17. 24. r ch. 5. 12; Deut. 28. 25, 64; Zech. 7. 14. s *cf.* vers. 18-22; Zech. 13. 9; *cf.* Mt. 3. 12. t *cf.* Is. 43. 28; *cf.* Is. 47. 6. u ch. 6. 7, etc. v ver. 1, etc. w Is. 1. 22; Ps. 119. 119. x Jer. 6. 28-30; *cf.* Lam. 4. 1; *cf.* Is. 1. 25; *cf.* Prov. 17. 3.

The evil speaks for itself, and what we have is an enumeration of crimes in high and in low; crimes of which the apostle says, with reference to them, that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them. We need not wonder at this. It is according to the constant rule of perverted privileges, and that which is done in the darkness elsewhere, is now done in the full light. Along with this, and instead of the anticipation of a sure judgment coming, that there was hardening of the heart against it is in entire harmony with all the rest. Nothing but the actual infliction of wrath would now avail. Words merely were useless. They must be replaced by deeds.

2. Accordingly, Jerusalem has become a furnace which melts down the various things exposed to it into one mass of manifest dross. God surely has

cause ye are all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the [y]midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and copper, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my wrath, and I will lay you there and [z]melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you with the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall [a]know that I Jehovah have poured out my wrath upon you.

3 (23-31): Corruption through and through, with none to stand in the gap.

3. And the [b]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her: Thou art a land that is [c]not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her [d]prophets in the midst of her like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they devour [e]souls; they take [f]treasure and precious things; they have increased her [g]widows in the midst of her; her [h]priests do violence to my law, and profane my holy things: they put [i]no difference between the holy and the profane, neither do they make known [the difference] between the unclean and the clean, and they hide their eyes from my [j]sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her [k]princes in the midst of her are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, to destroy souls, that they may get dishonest [l]gain. And

y *cf.* ch. 11. 2, 7. *cf.* ch. 24. 3-6. *cf.* ch. 21. 31, 32.
z *cf.* Is. 54. 16. *cf.* Mal 3. 2, 3. *cf.* Mal. 4. 1.
a vers. 16, 31.
b vers. 1, 17. etc.
c *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 14-16. Is. 1. 5. Jer. 2. 30. Zeph 3. 2.
d ch. 13 10-16. *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 11-13. *cf.* Jer. 5. 30, 31.
e *cf.* Jer. 2. 34. *cf.* Rev. 17. 6. *cf.* Rev. 18. 13.
f *cf.* Mt. 23. 14. *ctr.* 2 Ki. 5. 26. *cf.* Tit. 1. 11.
g *ctr.* Is. 1. 17. *cf.* Job 22. 9. *cf.* Is 10. 1, 2. *cf.* Lam. 5. 3.
h *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 12 17, 22. Mic. 3. 11, 12. Mal. 1. 6-8.
i *cf.* Lev. 10 1 3, 10 *ctr.* Jer. 15. 19. *cf.* Hag. 2. 11-13.
j ch. 20. 12, 13.
k ver. 6; Is. 1. 23; *cf.* Mic. 3. 1-3, 9-11. *l* ver. 13; *cf.* Mt. 21. 13.

purification in mind, but what is here is the wrath itself—a wrath by which what cannot be changed may yet be limited and kept under. And such will be the fire of hell; corruption, at last, will be permitted no longer; none of the rioting will be there which has been in men's shameful imaginations of what is to come; Satan, then, is the arch-tormentor no more, but himself the most tormented. Suited and necessitated penalty, carefully discriminated, will be God's decisive repression of that which can be no more permitted to break out at all. Man's ways come to an end then, and God comes to His own finally and fully.

3. The final word returns once again to the corruption itself. It is complete, among all classes, and especially are the prophets and priests brought into the dark catalogue here; for in *their* corruption hope is gone entirely. Among all these not a man was left ("and I sought for such," says the Lord), that can make up a fence to keep out the incoming desolation, or stand in the breach before Him, that He might not destroy the land. Thus, then, the indignation, so long warned of, is at last to be poured out: "I will consume them in the fire of my wrath. Their own way will I recompense upon their head, saith the Lord Jehovah."

Sec. 4.

We have now once more one of those apparent repetitions which, as such, emphasize the importance of what they speak. Yet there is perhaps no mere

her [m]prophets have daubed for them with untempered [mortar], seeing vanity and divining [n]lies for them, saying, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah! and Jehovah hath [o]not spoken. The [p]people of the land use oppression and practise robbery; yea, they have vexed the [q]poor and needy, and oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I [r]sought for a man among them that should make up the fence, and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I [s]poured out mine indignation upon them; I will consume them in the fire of my wrath: their [t]own way will I recompense upon their head, saith the Lord Jehovah.

m ver. 25. ch. 13.10-16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 11-15.
n ch. 13. 22. 23. Jer. 23. 25-32. *cf.* Zeph.3.4.
o Jer. 23. 21. *cf.* Jer. 28. 2, 16, 17.
p *cf.* vers. 25, 26, 27. *cf.* Is. 10. 2. *cc.* Jer. 5. 26-31.
q Job 24. 4, 14 Ps. 12. 5. Ps. 109. 16. r Is. 41. 28. Is. 59. 16. Is. 63. 5. Jer. 5. 1.
s vers. 21, 22.
t ch. 7. 3, 8, 9. ch. 9. 10. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.
u ch.22.1.etc.
v *cc.* ch. 16. 44, 46.

SECTION 4 (Chap. xxiii.).

Yielding themselves to the world.

1 (1-4): One mother and one course.

1. And the [u]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying: Son of man, there were [v]two women, daughters of one mother. And they committed whoredom in [w]Egypt:

ctr. Song 8. 8; *cf.* Jer. 3. 7-10. *w* ch. 20. 8; Lev. 17. 7. *cf.* Deut. 29 16, 17 with Josh. 24. 14.

repetition in all Scripture, and it is important for us to realize what constitutes the difference between things which at first sight seem absolutely similar. The present chapter gives us, as is evident, substantially the theme of the 16th; Israel's departure from God being symbolized by the sin of adultery; Jehovah's exclusive relationship to Israel among all the nations of the earth being compared in this way to marriage. God has taken up the most intimate relations of human life to show us the fulness of His love towards men, and the nearness in which His heart delights to bring us to Himself. All the greater therefore is the sin which breaks through a love so manifested, and we cannot wonder if the foulest of human sins becomes a shadow of that which is symbolized by it here. We shrink from these descriptions. How thoroughly God would teach us by it to loathe that which in His sight is so much worse: the human symbol is but a shadow of the greater sin!

It has been truly said that the present chapter, as compared with the former one, speaks of political, rather than of spiritual, departure from God; yet this only shows the more how intimately the two are related to one another. Religion is necessarily the most powerful bond that unites men together, and thus it is no wonder that when men no longer recognized the one true God, supreme over all, each nation came naturally to have its own gods whose glory or decay became identified with that of the nation to which they belonged. We see in Nebuchadnezzar's policy, in the setting up of his golden image in the plain of Dura, the recognition of the power of such a motive. The different gods of the subjected nations were acknowledged in what was owned as supreme over them still. As Nebuchadnezzar was a king of kings, so naturally in his thought was his god a god of gods. Such then being the condition of things, and idolatry set up everywhere among the nations dispersed at Babel, God had necessarily to separate to Himself politically a people who were to be in true spiritual relationship to Himself. Where the nations ruled, their gods must rule; and thus to lose national independence threatened the loss of all else. This could not have

they committed whoredom in their [x]youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there were handled the teats of their [y]virginity. And their names were Oholah, the elder, and Oholibah her sister; and they were mine,

[x] vers. 8, 19, 21. ch. 16. 22. *ctr.* Hos. 2. 15. *ctr.* Jer. 2. 2, 3.
[y] *cf.* Jer. 18. 13.

been as to Israel, had they not been untrue to themselves as the people of Jehovah. The captives in Babylon show what the change meant for the true-hearted under its imperial power.

Christianity, indeed, openly disclaimed any separate political existence for its converts; this was necessary; for, in the first place, it was a gospel for the world, going out freely to men apart from all question of nationality. Judaism had not such a gospel; and as long as Judaism lasted, the time for it had not come. The people whom God took up to reveal Himself to them showed this by their ready acceptance of the legal system after their own demonstrated inability, and on this account it was necessary that they should have it, that they should be allowed to prove in the fullest way that inability. The "due season" for the gospel did not come until man was shown not only to be "ungodly," but "without strength." Then and thus it was Christ died for us. But if God would prove in the completest way what man was, He must give them, and did give them, all the assistance in His power to walk aright according to a law. Thus they were fenced off from the intrusion of the nations, and assured of God's protection in preserving the fence. Among themselves they were bound together by family relationships, by the promises to their forefathers, which embraced them all, by the earthly blessings attached to obedience, by a central worship which drew them together from all parts of the land, while through all their tribes the cities of the priests and Levites were, as it were, a garrison to keep them for God—men separate from all other interests and devoted to God alone.

This all broke down, as we know; the hands of the people themselves broke it down. Christianity fully accepts the fact of this, being itself a complete salvation for men who can no longer trust in themselves at all; and it accepts the fact of a hostile world through which, kept by the power of God alone, His people have to make their way, finding in Christ at once their Leader and the Captain of their salvation. To the Jewish policy we cannot go back; and while on the one hand it is no wonder that men should have sought the advantage of this, it should be just as plain that for Christians themselves it is absolutely impossible. We stand by faith, and faith is not helped by circumstances, or by any natural conditions, but rather by the very difficulties which exercise and develop it. A higher blessing is thus secured for us as we have higher privileges and a perfect Example. We are strangers and pilgrims, and not citizens of earth at all. Yet there will be a time when God's present purpose completed, and His heavenly people taken to Himself, the world will be delivered from the power of evil which now rules it; and what we find in Israel of old will be reproduced again, with all the imperfection of it removed, in restored Israel, no longer in the midst of hostile nations, but under the dominion of Him who will be owned over all the earth, one Lord, and His name one.

1. In what is before us, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel are seen as distinct, but in closest relation to one another; alas, clearly related also in the common course that they pursue. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, there were two women, daughters of one mother." There

and they bore sons and daughters. And as for their names, [z]Samaria is Oholah, and [a]Jerusalem Oholibah.

2 (5-10): Oholah, the separate tent.

2. And Oholah played the [b]harlot when she was mine; and she doted upon her lovers, upon the [c]Assyrians

[z] *cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 20. [a] *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 29. *cf.* Ps. 76. 1, 2. [b] *cf.* 1 Ki. 14. 8-16. *cf.* 1 Ki. 15. 26, 30. [c] *cf.* 2 Ki. 15. 19.

is no need to question as to that mother now, nor to speak of Amorite or Hittite. The heredity which they exemplify goes further back, and lust, in whatever way displayed, is the beggar's badge which marks out everywhere fallen man. As the apostle has shown us, the full condition of man is reached and judged in that one commandment: "Thou shalt not lust." Of these lusts, the idols of the nations are the exhibition, and meant for their gratification. They represent an imaginary freedom of souls who have got away from God, seeking to satisfy themselves, apart from His way and will, with things incompetent to do so.

Such as these women here, all the children of Adam are in all their generations. And if we ask, as we look at their history, How could God take up such as these? the answer is found in another question: Where could He find any better? As we see their common origin, so we are taken back to Egypt to see them from the very beginning of their course nationally. And this licentious free-will marks them from the start. God had appointed them in Egypt a school which should have been profitable for them. No land could more fairly and fully exhibit the folly and degradation of heathen idolatry, while God made them also to realize the rod of the school-master in what they suffered at their hands. There was as plainly, on one side, God's meaning in all this, as on the other was exhibited the natural perverseness of the human heart. Little cause had Israel to take up with Egypt, themselves having the revelation of the true God and such promises of blessing as might well have won their hearts to obedience. Yet, it is plain, they accepted Egypt as their school in another way entirely from that in which God meant it. Egypt was the land of independence, the type of the world in that way, nurtured by the constant overflow of its river, with no need of the rain of heaven, which was, however, the source of the abundance that was round about them. But these sources were afar off, unnoticed and unknown, and if they were not content to make the river itself their god, as we know they did, there was another course, yet more satisfactory to human pride: "My river is mine, and I have made it"—the complete folly of which was no hindrance to its adoption. Manifestly, Oholah ("her own tent") made this the text upon which her conduct was the comment. Oholah is Ephraim, characterized by her chief city, Samaria, a name which speaks of the desire to preserve that which they stood for. Samaria (*Shomeron*) means "keeper" or "guard." It was Omri's city, set up against Jerusalem, and as Micah says (chap. vi. 16), "the statutes of Omri were kept" but too faithfully in it. But before this, at the very commencement of their independence as a kingdom, the calves which Jeroboam set up remind us of Egyptian worship. In fact, he had been in Egypt and manifestly brought them from thence.* Jerusalem, on the other hand, the capital city and representative of Judah, characterized by its glorious temple, was Oholibah ("my tent is in her") in contrast with Oholah, "her own tent." How far this affected her after-course we have already had intimated.

* Israel worshiped the golden calf at Sinai. Thus the Egyptian idolatry was manifest both in the earlier and the later apostasy.—S. R.

[her] neighbors, clothed in blue, governors and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses. And she bestowed her whoredoms upon them, all of them the choice of the sons of Asshur; and on whomsoever she doted, with all their idols she [d]defiled herself. Neither did she [e]leave her whoredoms [brought] from Egypt: for in her youth they had lain with her, and handled the breasts of her virginity, and

d ch. 22. 3, 4. Ps. 106. 39.
e Ex. 32. 4. *cf.* Hos. 2. 5. *cf.* Jer. 3. 1.

2. We have first the history of Oholah; and, under the strong figure of adultery, we find how the world outside at once attracted her. Assyria was her main attraction: "She doted upon her lovers, upon the Assyrians her neighbors, clothed in blue, governors and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses." In a worldly course, the world in fact surpasses the people of God, whose own things, the moment they seek the world, fail with them at the start. In the outside world there is full room for all the energy, ambition, luxury, self-enjoyment, which the terms speak of here: youth, vigor, the keen pursuit of that which man counts to be riches, and which makes him all that he can hope to be, these things attract, alas, how much, the people of God themselves!

And what does Asshur stand for? If we go back to the neglected book of national genealogy, the 10th chap. of Genesis, we find that Asshur has his place as the second son of Shem. He is, therefore, in the line of revelation, of which Shem speaks. Shem means "name;" the name of God revealed in connection with him, which makes him all that he is; and, as is well known, revelation as a whole has come to us through the line of Shem; and as has been said elsewhere (see Judges, chap. iii., *Notes*) the genealogy of Shem, as God has given it to us, shows in its necessary order the unfolding of this revelation.

We begin with Elam, which is only, in another form, Olam, "eternity;" and the first necessary revelation of God is that He is the Eternal. His name, therefore, which stands for what He is, must be eternal as Himself. Nevertheless, there is a gradual unfolding of this, of which Asshur in the next place speaks. Asshur means "step," and the steps of God, His activities, are also His manifestation. In every act of God, He more or less reveals Himself; and there has been, as we surely know, an adaptation of this revelation to the conditions and needs of men which has made it a revelation, gradual indeed, far more so than we should have thought could be; but our thoughts are not as God's thoughts. It has been shown, in what has just been referred to, that the names following show the continued development of the revelation.

Arphaxad, in the third place, brings us to what God's manifestation for the need of man is, the mystery in which He is truly manifest, the mystery of the cross being spoken of in it; while the next name, in the fourth place, Lud, "born," shows that He has revealed God in *manhood;* this humiliation of His being followed by what the last name speaks of, Aram, "exalted." The depths and the heights that we find in Christ are surely before us here. "Beautiful, however, as are these names thus joined together, we easily understand how in a world like this, and as connected with the human generations for which they stand, they soon scatter and fall away from one another, and thus lose their meaning and their beauty as united. The sentences become but broken words, capable of very different, even of opposite suggestion. The Shem families, as

poured their whoredoms on her. Therefore I [f]gave her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the sons of Asshur, upon whom she doted. These [g]uncovered her nakedness: they [h]took her sons and daughters, and [i]slew her with the sword: and she became a [j]name among women; and they executed [k]judgment upon her.

3 (11-35): Oholibah, "My tent in her."

3. And her [l]sister Oholibah saw [this], yet was she [m]more corrupt in her doting than she, and in her whoredoms more than the whoredoms of her sister. She doted upon the sons of [n]Asshur, her neighbors, governors and rulers, clothed to perfection, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men.

f *cf.* 2 Ki. 15. 19. 2 Ki. 17. 3-6, 36. 2 Ki. 18. 9-12. *cf.* Hos. 11. 5.
g ver. 29. ch. 16. 37, 41. Hos 2. 3, 10. *cf.* Rev. 2. 22.
h *cf.* ver. 47. *cf.* Dan. 1. 3.
i *cf.* Rev. 17. 16.
j *cf.* Jer. 22. 8, 9. Deut. 28. 37. Ps. 44. 14.
k *cf.* Is. 10. 5, 6. ver. 24.

l Jer. 3. 7, 8. m *cf.* Jer. 3. 10, 11; *cf.* Mt. 11. 20-24; *cf.* ch. 16. 48. n ch. 16. 28; *cf.* 2 Chr. 28. 16-23.

they scattered and multiplied into nations, lost almost entirely the promise of their origin. Their primitive worship became corrupted into a dark and debasing idolatry" in which, however, we find still as we look into them, the fragments of primitive revelation. Still, as a whole, the meaning is lost. Cut off from the Name of which they speak, there is no purpose of God really left. What should have been God's "steps" become in fact but a reflection of man himself and of his lusts. Strikingly in this way does Asshur's god speak for what he is. Asshur's god was Asshur. Man serves but himself—*himself*, alas, the miserable object of his worship! Even as the apostle puts it, with regard to some professing Christians, "whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame" (Phil. iii. 19). Yet he is successful, as men say; his energies are spent undividedly upon that which is within his reach, and "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." He is successful; and what is his success like? Look at the 73rd psalm for the answer, and see how perplexed even the godly can be at what he finds it. Only in the sanctuary can you learn the truth about it—the end of it.

After Asshur, therefore, Oholah goes with her whole heart. She still carries her Egyptian idolatries with her, for evil, as we know, is tolerant of evil, while the good is not. Yet at last, as we find in her history here, out of men's vices are hatched the hordes that prey on them, and out of this has arisen the fable that Satan is the torturer of men in God's final place of judgment; but this is only the reflection of present things. He is indeed *here* the torturer, not there; and God would wake man up by this constant connection of sin with its judgment. Man's pleasant vices are the whips that scourge him.

The history here in the case of Ephraim is plainly read: "I gave her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the sons of Asshur upon whom she doted. These uncovered her nakedness, they took her sons and daughters, and slew her with the sword, and she became a name among women, and they executed judgment upon her."

3. Oholibah's history now follows. In it we see once more the power of example, as we see also how one evil develops out of another, and the consequent progress made in a downward path. Once more Oholibah chooses the human school instead of the school of God, and learns nothing by His rod upon her sister. She too goes after the attractive Assyrians, but she adds to these the Chaldeans, the images of whom promptly carried her off. And these Chal-

And I saw that she was defiled: they both took [o]one way. And she [p]increased her whoredoms: for she saw men [q]portrayed upon the wall, the images of the [r]Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, with flowing turbans upon their heads, all of them leaders* in appearance, after the likeness of the sons of Babylon, of Chaldea, the land of their birth. And as soon as she [s]saw them she doted on them, and sent messengers to them into Chaldea. And the sons of Babylon came unto her in the bed of love, and [t]defiled her with their fornication; she too defiled herself with them, and her soul was [u]estranged from them. So she uncovered her whoredoms, and uncovered her nakedness: and my soul was [v]estranged from her, like as my soul was estranged from her sister. Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, [w]calling to mind the days of her youth, wherein she played the harlot in the land of Egypt. And she doted upon their paramours, [x]whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue as the issue of horses. Thus thou calledst to mind the lewdness of thy [y]youth, in the handling of thy teats by the Egyptians, for the breasts of thy youth.

* Lit., "Third men," *i. e.*, "leader of three."

o *cf.* 2 Ki. 17. 18, 19. *cf.* Hos. 12. 1, 2. *cf.* Rom. 3. 22, 23.
p *cf.* ch. 8. 6, etc.
q ch. 8. 10.
r Is. 47. 1. Jer. 50. 2. *cf.* Is. 39. 3-7.
s ch. 16. 29. *cf.* Job 31. 1 with Mt. 5. 28.
t *cf.* 1 Sam. 8. 6-8
u ch. 20. 43. ver. 13. *cf.* Hos. 5. 3.
v *cf.* 2 Sam. 13. 15. vers. 22, 28. *cf.* 2 Ki. 24. 20.
w *cf.* Jer. 6. 8. *cf.* Lev. 26. 30. *cf.* ch. 10. 18.
x vers. 3, 8. 21. *cf.* ch. 20. 7. *cf.* Acts 7. 39.
y ch. 16. 26. *cf.* Jude 7. ver. 8.

deans, as we learn by more than the derivation of their name, which seems to be "demon-like," bring with them a power of evil more intense, less human, more supernatural. As James teaches us, it is how the wisdom that cometh not from above develops; it is "earthly, sensual, devilish." These Chaldeans had their own tongue and learning, practised occult arts, "wore a peculiar dress like that seen upon the gods, and deified men in Assyrian sculptures." Added to this, they were not Shemites, but Cushites, and belonged fully to the darkness of this their origin. Yet Oholibah, as we see, is immediately attracted; their mere images attract her: "As soon as she saw them, she doted on them and sent messengers to them, unto Chaldea." This passion, as we know by their history, did not last long, except in its consequences. It was, as is so often the case, as short-lived as it was sudden. Oholibah returned to her old passion for Egypt, and this brought on her doom.

When her day of lawless self-will is past, the day of the Lord finds all her former lovers gathered against her. The mustering is come now, the sons of Babylon heading the list with all the Chaldeans; and Asshur too, with Babylon, Assyria following under the power of Nebuchadnezzar.

Numbered among the Chaldeans, we have three names which present a special difficulty. Pekod is, in Jer. l. 21, an allegorical name for Babylon itself as the land of "visitation"—there, visited of God; here a visitation of God upon others; or it may mean her "charge," "office," for officer. Shoa means "wealth," "liberal;" Koa, probably "prince." Geographically no such names are found within the limits of Chaldea, and the words remain a problem yet unsolved, while from the connection they might seem to form part of the enumeration of all that was brilliant and attractive in the land, now gathered

Therefore, Oholibah, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [z]raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy soul is estranged, and I will bring them against thee on [a]every side: the sons of Babylon, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod and Shoa and Koa, all the sons of Asshur with them; all of them desirable young men, governors and rulers, all of them leaders and men of renown, all of them riding upon horses. And they shall come against thee with [b]weapons, chariots, and wheels, and with an assemblage of peoples; with buckler and shield and helmet they shall beset thee round about: and I will [c]commit the judgment* unto them, and they shall judge thee with their judgments. And I will visit my [d]jealousy upon thee, and they shall deal with thee in fury: they shall [e]cut off thy nose and thine ears, and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: and they shall [f]take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be [g]devoured by the fire. They shall also [h]strip thee of thy garments, and take away thy fair [i]jewels.† And I will make thy lewdness to [j]cease from thee, and thy whoredom [brought] from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor [k]remember Egypt any more.

For [l]thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [m]give thee over into the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of them from whom thy soul is estranged; and they shall deal with thee in [n]hatred, and take away all thy labor, and [o]leave thee naked and bare; so that the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be [p]uncovered, both thy lewdness and thy fornications. These things shall be done unto thee, because thou hast gone [q]whoring after the nations, because thou hast [r]defiled thyself with their idols. Thou hast [s]walked in thy sister's way, and I have given [t]her cup into thy hand.

* Lit., "Set judgment before them." † Lit., "adornment."

z ver. 28. ch. 16. 37. *cf.* Is.10.5,6. *cf.* Hab. 1. 6-10. *cf.* Rev. 17. 16.
a *cf.* Jer. 6. 22, 23. *cf.* Jer. 12. 9-12. *ctr.* Ps. 118. 10-12.
b ch. 26. 10. *cf.* Jer.47.3. Nah. 2 3, 4.
c *cf.* ver. 45. *cf.* ch.16.38. *cf.* Jer. 39.5, 6.
d *cf.* Deut.29. 20. Song 8. 6. Zeph. 1. 18. Ex. 20 5
e *cf.* Rev. 17, 16. *cf.* 1 Sam.11. 2.
f ver. 47. Hos. 2. 4. 5. *cf.* Dan. 1.3.
g ch. 15. 6,7. ch. 20.47,48. *cf.* Rev.18.8.
h ver. 29. Jer. 13. 22.
i Is. 3. 17-24.
j ch. 16. 41. *cf.* Mic. 5. 10-15. *cf.* Zech. 13. 2.
k *ctr.* Hos. 14. 3, 8.
l ver. 1, etc.
m ch. 16. 37. Jer.21.7-10. Jer. 34. 20.
n ch. 16. 39. *cf.* Deut. 28. 47-52
o ver. 26.
p *cf.* Is 3. 17.
q ch. 6. 9. *cf.* Ps. 106. 35-38. *cf.* Jer. 2. 18-20.
r vers. 7, 17. *cf.* Acts 15. 20.
s ver. 13; ch. 16. 47-51.
t *cf.* 2 Ki. 21. 13; *cf.* Jer. 7. 14.

with the desirable sons of Asshur against Jerusalem. The qualities which before spoke of the energy and ability which carried away the hearts of the Israelites are now enumerated in the same terms, but realized now in an opposite interest. How men's old allurements face them in the day of visitation which comes for each one! They work their will without mercy, though the mere instruments of God's judgment, as He declares. The punishment of cutting off the nose and ears was the punishment of an adulteress; and we may remember how these, on God's part, were ornamented in a former chapter (xvi.) which gives us, as the present does not, the blessing which God had poured out upon those brought into this peculiar relationship to Himself. Now, not only the ornaments are removed, but there is no place for them any longer, mere deformity instead, and with the jewels the garments are also taken away.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Thou shalt [u]drink of thy sister's cup, deep and wide; thou shalt be for a [v]laughing-stock and derision: for it containeth much. Thou shalt be filled with [w]drunkenness and sorrow, [with] the cup of [x]astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy [y]sister Samaria: thou shalt even drink it and drain it out, and thou shalt gnaw the sherds thereof, and tear off thy breasts: for I have spoken [it], saith the Lord Jehovah. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thou hast [z]forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy fornications.

4 (36-49): The human appeal.

4. And [a]Jehovah said unto me, Son of man, wilt thou judge Oholah and Oholibah? Yea, [b]declare unto them their abominations. For they have [c]committed adultery, and [d]blood is in their hands; and with their idols have they committed adultery; and also their sons, whom they bare unto me, have they caused to [e]pass through [the fire] unto them to be devoured. Moreover, this have they done unto me: in the same day have they defiled my [f]sanctuary and profaned my [g]sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, they [h]came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it: and behold, this have they done in the midst of my house. And furthermore, they [i]sent to men to come* from far, to whom a messenger was sent; and behold, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, [j]paintedst thine eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments, and satest upon a stately bed, with a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hadst set [k]mine incense and mine oil. And the voice of a

u *cf.* Is.51.17. *cf.* Jer. 25. 15-28. *cf.* Rev. 16. 19.
v ch. 22. 4, 5. ch. 36. 3. *cf.* Deut. 28. 37. *cf.* Ps. 79. 4. *ctr.* Mic.7.8.
w Jer. 25. 27. Hab. 2. 16. *cf.* Is. 51. 21.
x *cf.* Is. 51.17, 22. Ps. 60. 3.
y ver. 32.
z ch. 22. 12. Jer. 2 32. Hos. 8. 14.
a vers. 1, 28.
b Is. 58. 1. Hos. 2. 2. Mic. 3. 8-11.
c *cf.* Hos.1.2. ver. 5.
d vers. 39, 45. ch. 16. 36, 38. Ps. 106. 37, 38. Is. 1. 15. Hos. 4. 2. *cf.* 2 Ki.24.4.
e ch. 20. 26, 31, etc. *cf.* Deut. 12. 31. *f ctr.* Lev.19. 30. *cf.* ch. 8. 16, etc.
g ch. 22. 8. Neh. 13. 17, 18. Jer. 17. 27.
h Is. 3 9. Jer. 7. 8-11. Mic. 3. 11. *cf.* Jno.18.28.
i ver. 16. Is. 57 9.
j *cf.* 2 Ki. 9. 30; Jer. 4. 30; ch. 16. 13-16; *cf.* Prov. 7. 10. *k* ch. 16. 18, 19; Hos. 2 8, 9.

* Or, "coming."

Yet all this severity is on God's part not mere judgment. The effect is, as He puts it here, to make the lewdness of Oholibah cease from her, and the objects formerly attractive to be turned from with loathing. One must come to one's self in order to come to God, and this is the process through which God was now bringing Israel. What a terrible thing to face, when one is left naked and destitute, all that gone which, while it was being squandered, made one for a time feel and look rich to others! But the cup now must be drained to its bitter dregs, wrung out in desperation by the soul that has lost its all, but cannot yet fully awake to it; the very sherds of the broken cup, as represented here, gnawed in madness to obtain that which is impossible, while the tearing off of the breasts is but the self-despair under which, if anywhere, the true blessing lies. But this is not gone on to in the chapter before us, which ends with judgment: "Because thou hast forgotten Me and cast Me behind thy back, therefore bear also thy lewdness and thy fornications."

4. God now appeals to man himself in the person of the prophet against both these debauched and uncensured women: "And Jehovah said unto me, Son of man, wilt thou judge Oholah and Oholibah? Yea, declare unto them their

[l] loose crowd* was in her: and with people of the common sort were brought Sabeans† of the wilderness: and they put bracelets upon their hands, and a beautiful crown upon their heads. And I said of her who was old in adulteries, Will she now, even she, commit her fornications? And [m] they went in unto her as they go in unto a harlot: so went they in unto Oholah and unto Oholibah, the lewd women. And righteous men, they shall judge them with the [n] judgment of adulteresses, and with the judgment of women that shed blood: for adulteresses they are, and blood is in their hands.

For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [o] I will bring up an assemblage against them, and will give them to be driven hither and thither, and spoiled. And the assemblage shall [p] stone them with stones and shall despatch them with their swords: they shall kill their sons and their daughters, and their houses they shall [q] burn with fire. And I will cause lewdness to [r] cease out of the land: and all women shall be [s] warned, and shall not do after your lewdness. And they shall [t] recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols; and ye shall [u] know that I am the Lord Jehovah.

*"Or, a multitude living at ease." †Or, "drunkards."

[l] *cf.* Ex. 32. 6, 18, 19. *cf.* Hos. 13. 6. Amos 6. 1-6.

[m] *cf.* Ezra 9. 7. vers. 3, 9-13.

[n] ver. 24. ch. 16. 38, etc.

[o] ch. 16. 40. Jer. 25 9. *cf.* Lk. 19. 43.

[p] ch. 16. 40. ch. 9. 6. Jer. 33. 4, 5. *cf.* Josh. 7. 25, etc. *cf.* Jno. 8. 5.

[q] Deut. 13. 16. Jer. 39. 8.

[r] ver. 27. ch. 22. 15. *cf.* ch. 36. 25. Mic. 5. 11-14.

[s] Deut 13. 11. *cf.* Esth. 1. 20.

[t] ch. 7. 4, 9, etc.

[u] ch. 24. 24, 27, etc.

abominations." And the story is repeated briefly with all the circumstances of its aggravation and the persistency of wickedness, which seems as if it would go on to the end—the scum of a pot, as in the next chapter, which will never be cleansed. Adultery and blood are both in the count against them here. Their idolatries contained both features: unfaithfulness to God, and causing their sons to pass through the fire to their idols to be devoured; and all the while shamelessly entering Jehovah's sanctuary, which could but be defiled by their presence; and His sabbaths, the sign of His covenant with them, profaned by all their actions. They had not been the victims of others, simply; they had not merely been solicited by others; they *themselves* had been the solicitresses, laboring to bring from afar those who could only pollute them with their abominations; they had decked themselves with the ornaments that God had given, for the reception of their corrupters!

The picture is painted for us in a few brief touches: the insensate profligate sitting upon a stately bed, with a table prepared before it whereon were placed the incense and the oil that belonged to her forsaken God. Around her the voices of a loose crowd in utter abandonment, even the Sabeans of the wilderness, the men who lived by pillage, as their name here may indicate, brought in to join with them, and all this when plainly old age was come upon her, hastened by her excesses.* The two sisters, every way such, are joined together in this count, and men of mere human righteousness are called to pronounce

* There is a resemblance to Jezebel, the apostate queen of Israel, 2 Kings 9: 30, who in her old age "painted her face and tired her head." She is also the symbolic adulteress in the professed church, the Thyatira of Rev. 2, whose adulteries bring down the Lord's judgments.—S.R.

SECTION 5 (Chap. xxiv).

The judgment reached.

1 (1-14): The stroke falls on the rebellious city.

1. And in the [v]ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month, the [w]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, [x]write thee the name of the day, of this selfsame day: the king of Babylon has [y]drawn near to Jerusalem this selfsame day. And utter a [z]parable unto the [a]rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [b]Set on the caldron, set it on, and also pour water into it; [c]gather the pieces thereof into it, every [d]good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; fill it with choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and [make] also a pile of the bones under it;* make it [e]boil well, yea, let the bones thereof be boiled in the midst of it.

*Or, "A pile [of wood] for the bones under [it]."

v cf. ch. 1. 2, etc. *cf.* 2 Ki. 25. 1. *cf.* Jer 52. 4. *cf.* Jer. 39. 1. *cf.* Zech. 8. 19.
w ch. 13. 1, etc.
x cf. Is. 30. 8, 9. *cf.* Hab. 2. 2, 3. *cf.* Jno. 4. 52.
y 2 Ki. 25. 1. Jer. 39. 1. Jer 52. 4.
z ch. 17. 2. ch. 19. 2, etc. *cf.* ch. 20. 49.
a ch. 2. 3, 6, etc. *cf.* Is. 1. 2. *cf.* Is. 30. 1, 9. *cf.* Acts 7. 51.
b cf. ver. 6 with ch. 11. 3.
c cf. ch. 22. 18 22; *cf.* Mic. 3. 2, 3.
d cf. ch. 20. 47; *cf.* ch. 34. 16, 20; *cf.* Lk. 1. 52; *cf.* Jer. 39. 6.
e cf. Is. 30. 33; *cf.* Mt. 3. 12.

the judgment upon them which they so well deserve. Thus a divine judgment is executed, but with the approbation of the human conscience everywhere. God and man are united together against them, but with the end in God's thoughts still of getting rid, by whatever severe measures, of the wickedness which else would never end, but which shall at last make them recognize their covenant-God in the holiness which compels Him thus to afflict them. The end for Israel and for the nations alike is ever that they shall know that He is the Lord Jehovah.

Sec. 5.

In the last chapter of this series, which comes evidently as an appendix to what has gone before, we find the judgment now reached. The king of Babylon has drawn near to Jerusalem, and with this, when fully ascertained, prophetic communications cease for the present. The events speak for themselves, and to God's voice in them they have now to listen.

There are two parts in the chapter. The first announces, before the people could have any message of it to reach them, that the siege has begun; while the second shows us what is implied in this—the divine sundering of the tie between Jehovah and the people, as figured in the death of the prophet's wife. These two parts are in a certain sense, and in a most touching manner, in contrast with one another, as we shall see when we examine them.

1. We are now in the second year from the last communication, and in the ninth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. The number speaks of divine manifestation, God manifesting Himself now, alas, in the very cloud which hides Him from the people; but the cloud is that which their sins have raised, and God is manifest in necessary judgment. Thus also the tenth month the tenth day of the month, speaks. The word of Jehovah comes to Ezekiel on that day, bidding him to write down the name of the day, with the assurance that the king of Babylon has drawn near to Jerusalem on that self-same day.

And now the taunt about the caldron is to be answered in the event. Jerusalem is indeed to be their caldron in which they are to be subjected to the

Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the [f] bloody city, to the [g] caldron whose rust* is [h] therein, and whose rust is not gone out of it. Bring it out piece by piece; no lot has fallen upon it. For her blood is in the [h] midst of her; she set it upon the bare rock; she [i] poured it not upon the ground to cover it with dust. That it might cause [j] wrath to come up to take vengeance, I have [k] set her blood upon the bare rock that it should not be covered. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [l] Woe to the bloody city! I [m] will also make the pile great. [n] Heap on the wood, kindle the fire, boil well the flesh, and make [o] thick the broth,† and let the bones be burned. Then [p] set it empty upon the coals thereof, that it may be hot, and the brass thereof may burn, and that the [q] filthiness thereof may be molten in it, and that its rust may cease. She has [r] exhausted labor, yet her great rust [s] goeth not forth out of her: let her rust be in the [t] fire. In thy filthiness is [u] lewdness, for I have cleansed thee, and thou wast [v] not cleansed. Thou shalt [w] no more be cleansed from thy filthiness till I have caused my [x] wrath upon thee to rest. I Jehovah have [y] spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I [z] spare, neither will I [a] repent. [b] According to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord Jehovah.

* Or, "filth." † Or, "Spice it well."

f cf. 2 Ki. 21. 16. Mic. 7. 2. *cf.* Nah. 3. 1.
g vers. 11-13. *cf.* Jer. 6. 29, 30.
h cf. Jer. 2. 34. *cf.* Jer. 6. 15. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21.
i Lev. 17. 13. Deut. 12. 16, 24. Job 16. 18. Is. 26. 21. *cf.* Gen. 4. 10.
j cf. Deut. 32. 21, 22. *cf.* 2 Ki. 22. 17, etc.
k ch 16. 37, 38. *cf.* Jer. 22. 8, 9.
l ver. 6. *cf.* Lk. 13. 34, 35.
m cf. Is. 31. 9. *cf.* Deut. 32. 22.
n ver. 5.
o cf. Jer. 20 5. *cf.* Mk. 9. 49.
p cf. Jer. 32. 29. *cf.* Jer 38. 18. *cf.* Jer 52. 13.
q ch. 20. 38. ch. 23. 26, 27. *cf.* Is. 1. 25. *cf.* Mic. 5. 11-14.
r cf. Is. 47. 13. *cf.* Is. 57. 9, 10. *cf.* Hos. 12. 1.
s cf. Is. 1. 5, 6; *cf.* Jer. 8. 11. *t cf.* Jer. 52. 13. *u cf.* ch. 23. 44, etc. *v* ch. 22. 24; *cf.* Is. 5. 7; *cf.* Jer. 25. 3-7. *w cf.* Hos. 7. 1, 9 16; *cf.* Mt. 23. 34-39. *x* ch. 5. 13; *cf* ch. 16. 42; *ctr* Zeph. 3. 17; *ctr.* Is. 40. 1. *y cf.* Is. 55. 10, 11; *cf.* Num. 23. 19; *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 20. *z* ch. 7. 4, 9, etc.; *ctr.* Mal. 3. 17. *a cf.* Jer. 23. 20; *ctr.* Rom. 11. 29. *b* ch. 16. 43, etc.; Gal. 6. 7.

fire of divine wrath: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Set on the caldron, set it on, and also pour water into it. Gather the pieces thereof into it, every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and make also a pile of bones underneath it. Make it boil well; yea, let the bones thereof be boiled in the midst of it." This then was to be the issue of every controversy with God, of which there was ample necessity. The city itself was a caldron whose rust was in it, and could not be scoured out. The whole, therefore, is visited. No lot has fallen upon it for the sparing of any. She had taken life—that life which God had ordained to be sacred, even where rightly taken, when the blood was to be poured out to Him. It had not been poured out; it remained to defile her; nay, she had set it upon the bare rock in open view: "She poured it not upon the ground to cover it with dust." Thus it cried openly for vengeance, and God had set her blood upon the bare rock, in His turn, that it should not be covered. The very city emptied of its inhabitants must go down in the fire of His anger: "Set it empty upon the coals thereof, that it may be hot, and the brass thereof may burn, that the filthiness thereof may be molten in it and its rust may cease. It has exhausted labor, yet its great rust goeth not forth out of it. Let its rust be in the fire." Thus after all possible pains taken with her, such pains as God Himself might take, she was not cleansed. Here then was the only possible end; inexorable, unsparing

2 (15 27): Mourning forbidden.

2. And the [c] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the [d] desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet thou shalt [e] not mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Sigh in [f] silence, make no mourning for the dead; bind thy [g] turban upon thee, and put thy [h] sandals upon thy feet, and [i] cover not the beard, and [j] eat not the bread of men. And I spake unto the people in the morning; and at even my wife [k] died. And I did in the morning as I was commanded. And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us [l] what these things are to us which thou doest? Then I said unto them, The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [m] profane

[c] ver. 1, etc.
[d] vers. 18, 21, 25. *cf.* Prov. 5. 19. *cf.* Song 7. 10. *cf.* Lam 1.7.
[e] *cf.* Lev. 10. 2, 3, 6. *cf.* Jer. 22. 10, 18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30.
[f] Ps. 39 9. Ps. 46. 10. *cf.* Amos 8. 3.
[g] *cf.* Lev. 21. 10.
[h] *cf.* 2 Sam. 15. 30.
[i] *cf.* Lev. 13. 45; *cf.* Mic. 3. 7.
[j] *cf.* Hos. 9. 4; *cf.* Jer. 16. 7;
[k] ver. 16; *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 30.
[l] ch. 12. 9, etc.
[m] ch. 7. 20-22; *cf.* Ps. 74. 7; *cf.* Mt. 23. 38.

judgment was alone sufficient for such a case: "According to thy ways and according to thy doings shall they judge thee, saith the Lord Jehovah."

2. We have now a parable of another nature, which seems to bear a double significance; one open, and one hidden. Jerusalem is gone in judgment. The city is gone, and the sanctuary with it—the sanctuary so necessary for the nation as a whole, where alone the blood of sacrifice could be offered to God. Thus the destruction of the sanctuary was the end of all relationship. What could remain between a holy God and a people for whose sins no atonement could be made? This is the overwhelming calamity which, as to the people, might well make every other of comparatively small account. The voice of lamentation itself was hushed in this silence of despair. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet thou shalt not mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down." It is not that grief is forbidden, but the expression of it. He is to be in this expressionless grief a sign to the people: "Sigh in silence, make no mourning for the dead, bind thy turban upon thee, and put thy sandals upon thy feet, and cover not the beard, and eat not the bread of men. And I spake unto the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded."

In contrast with the loud lamentation customary in such cases, for which they even hired mourners, this conduct calls for explanation: "The people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us which thou doest? Then I said unto them, The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Say unto the house of Israel: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes and the pity of your soul, and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left behind shall fall by the sword." It is the mourning for these last that is to cease in view of the mourning which can have no sufficient expression.

Yet, after all, it is not they who can feel these things according to the divine account of them. They might be overwhelmed by the calamity, but were to pine away in iniquities yet unrepented of. This is why, as it seems, the full meaning as to what Ezekiel is called to do does not come out. The loss of their sons and daughters, with all its severity, cannot answer to this breaking of a marriage-tie under which Ezekiel suffers. For that, we have to think of the

my sanctuary, the [n]pride of your power, the [o]desire of your eyes, and the pity of your soul; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left behind shall [p]fall by the sword. And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall [q]not cover the beard, nor eat the bread of men; and your turbans shall be upon your heads, and your sandals upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall [r]pine away in your iniquities, and moan one toward another. Thus Ezekiel shall be unto you a [s]sign; according to all that he hath done shall ye do: when it cometh, then ye shall [t]know that I am the Lord Jehovah.

n *cf.* Mt.24.1. *cf.* Jno. 19. 20.
o *cf.* Ps. 27. 4. *cf.* Ps. 84. 1. *cf.* Is. 64. 11.
p ch.23.25,47. Jer. 6. 11.
q vers. 16, 17. *cf.* Ps.78.64. *cf.* Jer. 16. 4-7.
r ch. 4. 17. ch. 33. 10. Lev. 26. 39.
s ch. 4. 3. Is. 8. 18. Hos. 1 2.
t ch. 7. 9, 27, etc.

sanctuary itself gone, which was the pledge and seal of the tie, which spoke of the Lord's presence with them, and gave the people access to Himself; that tie being broken, it might well swallow up all others.

But this does not put the prophet's parabolic action in its full meaning before us. Ezekiel himself is plainly here, as elsewhere, the representative of God to the people, as the prophet in fact always was. It is to be noted that the stroke falls not upon the people, but upon the prophet himself. Nor is it inflicted as a judgment, as far as he is concerned. With the prophet there is no divorce from God by it; on the contrary, just at this time he stands before the people fully as the representative of God Himself, speaking and acting in His name. We have to take the prophet here as really representing the One for whom he stands. Thus it is not obscurely intimated that the prophet's sorrow is the sorrow of God Himself. The affliction is on *His* part, not on man's side. Yet it is an affliction which can find no expression in the midst of a people obdurate as these are. It is their sin which has wrought their calamity. It is their sin in which they still pine away; feeling, no doubt, certain effects of it, but not the iniquity itself. He who has inflicted it is He who feels what He has inflicted. It is the sundering of His own relationship with a people whom He had taken up to manifest His love to them and to bring them near to Himself in such a way as all their history indicates. Yet He has been compelled to give them up. The tie, in fact, is broken, for we are not thinking here of purposes to be fulfilled in the end, but of present relationship, and these ended for the nation as such. Yet He who in all their affliction has ever been afflicted, can give no expression to it. It is the shadow of judgment which is necessarily over them all and which hinders this expression.

Yet how wonderful in its pathos is this unexpressed, inexpressible sorrow with which all this part of the prophecy closes! God will not, as it were, permit it all to end in judgment merely, without bringing us to His side in this matter, if we have heart for it, and showing us how truly *His* heart remains unchanged, and how thoroughly the divorce which He has given, as He says in Hosea, is not on His side but on theirs. Nothing can divorce His heart from the objects of His love, and if He has to act in a way apparently most contradictory to this, faith may yet penetrate the disguise and realize the love unchangeable throughout it all. This is what seems to be the meaning here—the meaning upon His side; the worthy end to which we have been looking.

The prophetic communication to the people closes here for the time. The last act of the judgment which is now about to take place is to be waited for until the message shall come which speaks of its full accomplishment. For

And thou, son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and the burden * of their souls, their sons and their daughters, that in that day he that [u]escapeth shall come unto thee to cause thine ears to hear it? In that day shall thy [v]mouth be opened to him that is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb. So shalt thou be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.

* Or, "choice."

u *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 12–18. *cf.* Job 1. 15–19.
v ch. 3. 26, 27. ch. 29. 21. ch. 33. 22. *cf.* Lk. 1. 20, 64.

nearly a year and a half the siege lasted, and then came the message that the city was taken. In that day, when at last all was over, and no false hope could any longer be maintained, the prophet's mouth would be opened. He would speak, and no more be dumb. This we shall find accordingly in the third division of these prophecies. When judgment has had its way, and God's holiness is fully vindicated, the prophet's mouth is to be opened, not in judgment once more, but in the announcement of blessing to come; of blessing which, in God's unrepenting goodness, is still reserved for them, however much their persistent iniquity has delayed the fulfilment of it.

DIVISION 2 (Chaps. 25–32.)

Judgment is now executed upon Israel, God's special people, who owed their prominence to the privileges granted to them, as the apostle reminds us —"chiefly that unto them were committed the oracles of God." But this of necessity includes others also, in so far as these oracles have reached to others besides Israel. In God's mind His house was to be a house of prayer for all nations; and Israel, with her miraculous history, whose land was on the highway of national intercourse, was to be wisdom's voice heard in the crossways in which God had appointed her stand. Could the nations around be guiltless, then? They were not in the simple ignorance which God could overlook, as the apostle states in his address to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 30). In fact, as we shall see, the message had in measure told upon them, but only to arouse, as to the mass of them, the natural enmity of the human heart to God. Accordingly, if Israel be judged, the nations around her must also be dealt with, and dealt with by the instrument which God uses in the judgment of Israel herself. Thus it is the nations in various degrees of relation to Israel that we find now summoned before the judgment-seat.

Seven of the nations around are thus made special representatives of such responsibility, and their attitude towards the chosen people of God stands at the forefront of the account. In principle we have here what will be repeated in the last days, in the judgment before the Son of Man (Matt. xxv. 31–46, see *Notes*). Ammon we find to be against the sanctuary and the land. Moab, in pride of heart, will see nothing in Israel but a nation like all the rest. Edom and Philistia have nursed a spirit of vengeance against her. Tyre finds her own gain in Israel's fall. Sidon has been a sting and a thorn to her; and Egypt, always a staff of reed. Whatever difference there may be one from another, it is plain that God's word in Israel, which is necessarily for all His creatures, has been disregarded or refused. It may be said, and truly so, that there was not a missionary spirit in Israel, and that as yet there was no proper gospel to

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. xxv.-xxxii.)

The judgment upon the Gentile enemies.

SECTION 1 (Chap. xxv. 1-11).

Ammon-Moab, one in descent, in sin, and retribution. Their land given to the sons of the East.

1 (1-7). Rabbah made a solitude for their joy at the desolation of the temple and the land.

1. AND the [w]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the children of [x]Ammon, and prophesy against them; and say unto the children of Ammon, Hear the word of the Lord Jehovah: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because

[w] ch. 24. 1, etc.
[x] ch. 21. 28-32. Jer. 9. 25, 26. Jer. 25. 21. Jer. 49. 1-6. Amos 1. 13-15. Zeph. 2. 8-11. *cf.* Judg. 11. 4, etc. *cf.* 1 Sam. 11, 1, etc. *cf.* 2 Sam. 10. 1, etc.

go out to others. Nevertheless, for the heart that seeks Him, there will be the consciousness that wherever He is to be found, He is the rewarder of those that seek Him out. His gifts, wherever appreciable to the carnal mind, will be easily recognized and sought after. At the time of Israel's deliverance, when judgment passed upon Egypt and upon all her gods, there was such a testimony as could not be mistaken, but it only brought out more fully the fact that there was no heart to respond to it—that their ignorance of God was a willing ignorance. Thus the opposition of surrounding nations to Israel in her after-course was, manifestly, largely due to a claim which these things pressed upon them, and to which they did not yield.

It has been remarked by some that the number of these nations—seven in all—is meant to be significant. Together they present an epitome of the world as a whole, in the different forms which this resistance takes. This surely should cause us to inquire into the particular significance of each of these, and what we are to learn by it; but it has been little inquired into. If we examine it, however, we shall find that what is given us here is not simply the world in Israel's time, but the world in our time also. It is essentially the same—one in spirit all through; and the lessons therefore abide for us to-day; typically they are for spiritual lessons to us, having at the same time a prophetic meaning, manifesting itself everywhere to those who care to see. Let us take them up therefore in this manner, remembering the importance to apprehend God's mind in everything that He may communicate to us, and that true blessing to ourselves is not merely found in what is distinctly addressed to ourselves, but in the apprehension of what God would give us in the consideration of all His ways either in judgment or in grace. His steps everywhere, as we have said before, are always steps of revelation. His *acts* are of significance, as His words are; and here, as elsewhere, all these things happened and were recorded for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Sec. 1.

First of all, the kindred peoples of Ammon and Moab are set before us: one in their origin, according to their well-known shameful history, and one in their sin, as we shall see directly; one also, therefore, in the retribution which comes upon their sin. Yet there is a difference between them, a difference fully recognized in what we find here.

1. Ammon faces us first. In him is marked opposition to the sanctuary and to the land of Israel. But the sanctuary is God's dwelling among men, the expression thus of grace—a grace which has been only more fully made

thou saidst, Aha, [y]against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the [z]land of Israel, when it was made desolate; and against the [a]house of Judah, when they went into captivity: therefore, behold, I will give thee to the [b]children of the East for a possession, and they shall set their [c]encampments in thee, and make their dwellings in thee; they shall [d]eat thy fruits, and they shall drink thy milk. And I will make [e]Rabbah a habitation for camels, and the children of Ammon a couching place for flocks: and ye shall [f]know that I am Jehovah. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thou hast clapped thy hands, and

y vers. 6, 8. ch. 26.2,etc. *cf.* Prov. 17. 5. *cf.* Lam. 4. 21. *cf.* Ps.137.7. *cf.* Obad.10-14.
z *cf.* ch.21.3. *cf.* ch.6.2,3.
a *cf.* ch. 20. 45, 46. *cf.* Dan. 1. 2, etc.
b *cf.*Judg.6.3. *cf.* Num.23. 7. *cf.* Is. 41. 2.
c *cf.* Lk. 19. 43. *d* *cf.* Lev. 26. 16; *cf.* Deut. 28. 33, 50, 51; *cf.* Is. 1. 7. *e* ch. 21. 20; *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 26; *cf.* Is. 17. 2; *cf.* Zeph. 2. 14, 15. *f* ch. 25. 17, etc.

known in after-times. In Christ we have had the fullest expression of it, dwelling amongst men in such a way as told out His delight in them; and this is a step which He will never take back. In Him, God and man are indissolubly joined, and with Him there is no repentance. The land of Israel is the portion which God in grace has given them, and in which He would make manifest the blessedness of those who draw near to Him. These are lessons which at all times are meant to speak to all; but as Israel on the one hand could take such privileges to glorify themselves with them, and despise others, so on the other hand, men could take them as the mere exhibition of a narrow partiality on God's part, and make Him but as one of the gods of the nations round about.

If in this way we look back at the history of Ammon it will have continual significance for us. Their first father's name, Ben-ammi, "son of my people," is significant, if we think of it as in opposition to the people of God. The land also, as we find in the history of the Judges, he covets for himself, though he can take possession really of nothing, being only the nomad ravager which everything shows him to be. Thus, as others have remarked, we have no cities of the land of Ammon; nothing that indicates the proper occupation of the soil or the care of the agriculturist. Rabbah is his one city, "numerous," as we may read the word, the hold of a motley host, as it were, but the stronghold of a Bedouin race; and the judgment which falls upon it is completely in character with this. In the congruous ways of God, the land of Ammon is given up to similar raiders, "the sons of the East;" the word for east signifying what is opposite to you, but which may easily acquire the character of what we find in the east wind—what is in opposition, or adverse. "The sons of the East," such as the Ishmaelites, were men whose hand was against every one, and every one's hand against them. Rabbah, under them, becomes itself broken up, and is but a habitation for camels, "the burden bearers" of the desert.

If we look further at Ammon, and in the light of his previous history, which has been elsewhere considered, we need have little difficulty in discerning the foe who makes his attack upon the things of primary importance for us; above all, upon the grace of God and the portion which grace has for His people. It is characteristic of the errorist of all time, in whom the power of Satan specially is at work, one who is ever against Christ, and necessarily, therefore, against His people. Nahash, "the serpent," the king of Ammon, is thus the figure of the great adversary of God and man. His attack upon the people in Saul's

stamped with the feet, and [g]rejoiced with all the spite of thy soul against the land of Israel; therefore, behold, I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and will give thee for a [h]spoil* to the nations; and I will [i]cut thee off from the peoples, and I will cause thee to [j]perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah.

2(8-11): Moab associated with Seir and Ammon; judged according to their associations.

2. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because that [k]Moab and Seir say, Behold, the house of Judah is [l]like unto all the nations, therefore, behold, I will [m]open the side

* Or, "for food," as good authority gives it.

g ver. 3, etc. ver. 15.
h Amos 1. 13-15.
i Jer. 49. 2.
j *cf.* Num. 24. 18-20.
k *cf.* Num. 22. 2 6, etc. Num. 24. 17, 18. *cf.* Ps. 83. 4-8. Is.chs 15,16. Jer. 48. Amos 2.1-3. Zeph. 2. 8-11.
l *cf.* ch. 35.

11; *cf.* Is. 36. 18-20; *ctr.* Num. 23. 9. m *cf.* Is. 45. 1; *cf.* Jer. 50. 26; *cf.* Zech. 11. 1, 2.

time has been already considered in its place. Heresy, as we know, takes away the portion of God's people, but it is able to do nothing with it. It cannot make the land fruitful in which it is simply a raider, and indeed cannot retain that upon which it may lay hold, as we see in Ammon's previous possession of the land of Sihon which they had lost to the Amorite.

All this is in the deepest way instructive for those who have learned in Scripture history to find not merely that, but prophecy also, bringing out, as prophecy ever does, the mind of God, His judgment of all the things that come into man's mind. It is not the place to dwell upon it here at length, but the history will be found in this way significant throughout, and not merely in a few points which a lively imagination may read things into. The history as such, with all its admonition, is the more confirmed, of course, as we realize it to be an inspired history; with the breath of the Spirit of God in them, the prophets wrote much better than they knew.

2. From Ammon now we turn to Moab, who is associated in the closest way with Ammon, and with Seir also, in whom one of the great lessons that we read is the gravity of the association. In all that is here Moab is scarcely seen alone. Moab is the company-lover, and not careful as to the company he keeps; he is the true child of Lot, as we see at once, if we remember him as with Abraham on the one hand, and on the other off into Sodom, drawn there by what gain he can find in it. Moab is thus the very type of the comfortable worldling who will keep company with the people of God until he can almost persuade himself, as he would others, that he is one with them, while on the other hand he can consort with what is in deadliest opposition to the people of God; he is not able to discern for himself what constitutes the difference.

Thus, "Moab and Seir say, Behold the house of Judah is like unto all the nations." Moab's character is thus as plainly marked as that of Ammon. In contrast with Ammon, he can win his land and have his cities, which are the glory of it. As mentioned specially here, he has a Beth-jeshimoth ("a house of the wastes") to redeem the wastes. He has a Baal-meon, or more fully, Beth-baal-meon ("the house of the possessor of a dwelling"), and he appreciates it, of course. Then he has a Kiriathaim, "a walled double city," in which security and the association which he loves, so favorable for polish and practical activities, are combined. These things stand for principles which men still glory in; and they come so near to what is true and right, that we find them taken up and adopted by Reuben, the typical child of God, as there is, no doubt, such

of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kirjathaim, unto the [n]children of the East, with the sons of Ammon; and I will give it them for a [o]possession, that the children of Ammon may not be remembered among the nations: and I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall [p]know that I am Jehovah.

SECTION 2 (Chap. XXV. 12-14).

Edom the unbrotherly enemy; the Lord's vengeance for his vengeance.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because that [q]Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking [r]vengeance, and hath made himself very guilty, and re-

n ver. 4.
o ctr. Ps. 83. 3-6. *cf.* Is. 23. 15, 16.
p ver. 5, etc.
q vers. 3, 8, etc. 2 Chr. 28.17. Ps. 137. 7. Jer. 49. 7, etc.
r Amos 1. 11, 12. Obad. 10-16. *cf.* Gen. 27. 41, 42. *ctr.* Rom. 12. 19-21.

transformation in them as that into which faith introduces him (Josh. xiii. 17–20. Compare Numbers xxxii. 38, *Notes*).

In all this, Moab exemplifies typically the professor of religion, but always tending to go easily with the heretic; he makes Christianity itself, as Moab made Judaism, but one of the forms which illustrate the religious element in man. Every one knows what a favorite idea this is coming to be in these last days. Thus Moab, in full company with Ammon in his later history and in his spirit, becomes partaker of his doom. In other places of Scripture they are treated as if one. The company he keeps testifies of the man he is; this is a lesson as to association which is continually needful.*

Sec. 2.

The judgment passes on to Edom, the typical enemy of Israel, who, according to what we have seen of it elsewhere, presents to us the world of the old man, as we may say—the natural fallen man—the most real enemy we have as Christians; none the less so for being akin to us all naturally, even as Edom was the unbrotherly brother of Israel. His enmity is characterized here as revenge. He had, as we know, a quarrel from the beginning—the primal loss of his birthright-blessing, *his* sale of which, for a mess of pottage, has passed out of his memory. Nothing is stated here as to the cause of his enmity, which is indeed inherent in his nature. The old man has had a quarrel with God from the beginning; having turned his back upon Him, and so lost paradise, he counts against God the evils of the place in which he finds himself now, which is indeed very much a wilderness, a "rugged" place, such as Seir was for Edom, according to its name. Yet he has acquired wisdom in it, the wisdom gathered from experience: "Necessity is the mother of invention," as the proverb says; and fallen man has sought out many inventions.

Teman, spoken of here, was noted for the wisdom of its inhabitants. It means "the right hand," which, according to Scripture usage, was the south, and as

* Moab and Ammon, the children of Lot, as pointed out in the text, are by their close relationship to Israel types of profession. From the history in the book of Judges, we would gather that Moab represents profession closely coupled with the lusts of *the flesh;* Ammon with the lusts of *the mind.* The one brought God's people into slavery through their appetite; the other through the darkening of their minds. See Judges 3:12-30; 11:4-28. We see the bondage of *Moab* in the worldliness, love of ease and pleasure of the day; of *Ammon* in the infidelity, higher criticism and general unbelief so common.—S. R.

venged himself upon them, therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also [s]stretch out my hand upon Edom; and will [t]cut off from it man and beast; I will even make it [u]desolate from Teman, even unto Dedan shall they fall by the sword. And I will execute [v]my vengeance upon Edom by the [w]hand of my people Israel; and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my wrath; and they shall [x]know my vengeance, saith the Lord Jehovah.

s vers. 7, 16. Is 34. 6. Is. 63. 1-6. Lam. 4. 21, 22.
t cf. Is. 34. 11-15. *cf.* Jer.7. 20.
u cf. 1s. 34. 9, 10. Obad. 8, 9.
v Jer.49.8-13. *cf.* Heb. 10. 30, 31.
w cf. Gen.27. 29.

cf. Ps. 83. 9, etc; *cf.* Is. 11. 14; *cf.* Ps. 149. 6-9. *x cf.* Deut.32. 35, 36. *cf.* Ps. 9. 16.

this, has many significant implications. The right hand is the place of dependence, yet of honor: it was the place of Reuben in the wilderness, and we may remember that he also was a first-born who had lost his birthright place, and yet found blessing in the loss itself. Typically he is the man of faith, essentially dependent, yet finding abundant resources in God who is for him—the refuge always of the destitute. This Reuben thus learns a wisdom of his own, the wisdom of faith; and in this way, as the book of Numbers shows us, falls heir to Sihon, the king of Heshbon, which he possesses and builds up afresh. The story has been told elsewhere. (See *Notes*, Numbers xxxii.) Heshbon means "device," and it is faith that restores the reason in man to its natural, dependent place, to find how much blessing in it! Teman's wisdom is dependent also, necessarily; it is Edomite, not Israelite—a fleshly dependence, therefore. He has no faith in God to keep him steady, to give him fixed points to reason from; he is born into a world where he must receive largely from others, inheriting the thoughts of men, fallible, in fact, often deceived, sinful, and capable of deception. Yet men pride themselves upon this godless wisdom, which so often assumes the name of science, though in its wilful ignorance of God it is necessarily ignorant of the sources and origin of all things.

And here we find another name in the prophecy which seems to have a relation and adds significance to all this. Dedan is given as meaning "progress" —the watchword of the day, we might say; but which, after all, has doubt thrown upon it, in its derivation from a word which means not exactly to go forward, but rather to go softly or slowly. Slow enough indeed has been man's progress through all these centuries of his possession of the earth, although the pace may be quicker now through the multiplication of experiences and experiments which he has been able to make. He has been variously assisted along the road, and by nothing so much as by the divine revelation which has lighted up every place in which it has shone, which he, nevertheless, is seeking to discredit as "unscientific." Discarding this, however, his science must necessarily lose knowledge of the beginning, and is unable to look onward to the end. Put human wisdom right, let it not be esteemed as opposed to faith, let faith not be thought unreasonable, but rather the highest character of reason, and then indeed we might see splendid work, with nature yielding its resources —spite of the fall yielding true blessings, in the bounty of God, which still it witnesses.

Stranger than this unbrotherly strife between Edom and Israel is that which is seen between the men of nature and the men of God. Yet it will continue, if we read Scripture aright, and Ezekiel's prophecy should throw light upon it and make us aware of what is coming. For power will assuredly put down

SECTION 3 (Chap. xxv. 15–17).

The Philistines under ban.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Because the [y]Philistines have dealt by [z]revenge, and have taken vengeance in spite* of soul, to [a]destroy with perpetual enmity; therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [b]stretch out my hands upon the Philistines, and I will [c]cut off the Cherethites,† and [d]destroy the remnant of the sea-coast. And I will [e]execute great vengeance upon them with wrathful rebukes; and they shall [f]know that I am Jehovah when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.

y vers. 6, 12 *cf.* Is. 14. 29–32. *cf.* Jer. ch 47. *cf.* Amos 1. 6–8.
z ver. 12.
a *cf.* Judg. 13 1, etc. *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 1, etc.
b vers. 7, 13.
c 1 Sam. 30. 14. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 4, 5.
d Jer. 47. 4.
e ver. 11. *cf.* ch. 5. 15.
f vers. 5, 11, etc.

* Or, "contempt." † Lit., "those cut off;" the same root as "I will cut off." They thus answer to their name.

those whom grace has not subdued; and if neither the witness of Scripture nor of nature have a right effect upon this pride of human wisdom, God Himself must interfere. There is nothing left but for Him to come in in necessary judgment. In the case of Edom, as given here, Israel will be God's instrument in this; for we know by the voice of prophecy everywhere that to Israel is given the inheritance of the earth, and through the seed of Abraham alone shall all the families of the earth be blessed. The gospel will not effect what men are looking for from it—though it does take out from the earth a people for heaven; but He to whom will be given the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, will surely rule over the nations with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter shatter them to pieces. This, and Israel's part in it, we find abundantly in the prophets elsewhere, but it is not the place here to take it up. (See Jer. li. 20, 23; Isa. xi. 14, etc.)

Sec. 3.

The Philistines next come before us, as partakers of this inherent and perpetual enmity of Edom. They were intruders into a land promised to Israel, though with a conviction of their own prior right. They have given their name to the whole land (Palestine, from *Philistia*), which they claim, though they have never been able to take possession of more than its mere lowest border. We have seen them abundantly elsewhere, as typically natural men intruding into spiritual things. As Philistines they are "immigrants," but never Hebrews —that is, "passengers" or "pilgrims." They figure largely in the earlier historical books as far as Samuel, and must have a corresponding importance in their signification for us. As Christians, we should know these Philistines very well. They are seen to-day in what claims to be the Catholic, the Universal Church, but which spiritual judgment recognizes as but Judaism with a thin veil of Christianity drawn over its face, and with the full inheritance of Jewish enmity to the children of the free woman apparent through it. Into this also we cannot enter now, and need not, as any that will can find it fully where the interpretation naturally belongs. (See *Notes* on Gen. xx.; xxvi. 12; Josh. xiii. 2, 3; 1 Sam. xvii., etc.)

We have but one class of these Philistines specially noticed here, the Cherethites, the "cutters off," which have been also elsewhere considered. (See Acts xxvii., *Notes.*) "Cutting off" naturally characterizes asceticism in its

SECTION 4 (Chaps. xxvi.-xxviii).

Tyre and Sidon, the world of mammon under the abasing hand of God.

1 (xxvi.): Tyre to be bare rock.
1 (1-6): The occasion of her fall.

1. [1]And it came to pass in the [g]eleventh year, on the first of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, because [h]Tyre hath said [i]against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken, the gate of the peoples! She is turned unto me: I shall be [j]replenished now that she is laid waste. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [k]against thee, O Tyre,

[g] ch. 1. 2. ch. 8. 1. ch. 20. 1.
[h] *cf.* Ps. 83. 7. Is. 23. Jer. 25. 22. Joel 3. 4. Amos 1. 9, 10. Zech. 9. 2-4.
[i] ch. 25. 3, etc.
[j] *cf.* ch. 35. 10.
[k] *cf.* ch. 28. 22.

every shape, a remnant merely of the old heathenism, whatever its Christian dress. Externalism is manifest here, even in the most zealous forms of devotion. The Cherethites are taken by many, in certain passages at least, to mean "executioners," and in this form of cutting off, Philistinism has ever distinguished itself; and, doubtless, many who sacrificed in this way the deepest feelings of their nature have thought they were doing God service. But all through, the enmity against Israel (the literal as well as the typical enmity) is apparent in what is here, and God threatens the Cherethites in a special manner: "Behold, I will stretch out my hands upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites, and destroy the remnant of the seacoast." Thus Philistia will perish in the day of God, and all that are with God will only rejoice over the judgment.

Sec. 4.

We come now to Tyre, though in Tyre we find no direct enmity to Israel. Tyre, as we know, was in the days of David and Solomon ministering in friendly fashion to the Israelites; and in the day of their prominent blessing, under Christ their King, the daughter of Tyre will be there again with a gift. Tyre thus stands apart from Edom and Philistia. She is a Canaanite, however —of no good significance in this respect. The Canaanite was ever under the doom of being a servant of servants to his brethren, and in his proudest day he is still this. Tyre is essentially the merchantman; his professed object even is to serve. No doubt his aim is first of all to serve himself. He has not the true spirit of service for God, but finds in the necessity of man the opportunity for his own gain, and this is what we find as to the cause of his judgment here. Jerusalem has been judged—Jerusalem, in many ways a centre of attraction for the people around, "the gate of the peoples," as Tyre calls her. The rejoicing at her fall is Canaanite enough. She says against Jerusalem: "Aha, she is broken, the gate of the peoples; she is turned unto me. I shall be replenished now that she is laid waste." How naturally we understand it, alas! How natural it is! How common is such rejoicing on the part of merchantmen at all times! The habitual acquirement of riches from the need of others hardens the heart, there is little need to say; and thus with Tyre here: and for this she is judged. As we plainly see, Tyre is the world of mammon, and we need not wonder at the large place it has in Ezekiel's prophecy.

1. Tyre means "a rock." This island city was built upon a rock, and what it needed for its peculiar purposes was not productive power in the place it occupied, but a suitable gathering point where the products of other parts might come and be exchanged. In the immensity of its resources, Tyre might indeed look upon itself as a rock that could not be shaken. The greater the necessities of others, the more the streams of supplies from all quarters ministered to it.

and will cause [l] many nations to come up against thee, as the [m] sea causeth its waves to come up. And they shall [n] destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her a [o] bare rock. She shall be a place for the [p] spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah; and she shall become a [q] spoil for the nations. And her [r] daughters that are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall [s] know that I am Jehovah.

l *cf.* Mic. 4. 11. *cf.* Zech. 14. 2.
m *cf.* Jer. 6. 23. *cf.* Rev. 13. 1 with Rev. 17. 15.
n ver. 9. Is. 23. 11.
o *cf.* ch. 24. 7, 8. *cf.* Lk. 19. 44.
p ver. 14.
q ch. 25. 7. *cf.* ch. 29. 18, 19. *r* ver. 8; *cf.* Jer. 49. 2. *s* ch. 25. 17, etc.

But God takes up its character in result, and pronounces that it *shall* be a rock—a rock and nothing more—"a bare rock," or "cliff," as the word which He uses means. The word for "bare," means rather, "dry," dried by the sun, in fact; barren enough, surely, in the idea of it, for few things can dry as the sun.

The point for us is that which we find in the first ancestor of all these Canaanites, who were Hamites; and Ham is "the sun-dried one." He is what man fallen from God and in conflict with Him necessarily is, darkened by the light itself. And this is the nature of all heathenism; not, as people imagine, a condition in which men are groping after God, but on the contrary, one in which they are doing their best to *forget* God, and turn away from Him. God did not leave man His creature without the primitive knowledge of Himself; and there is in him still a witness to God, however perverted. But if he turns from the *true* God, he must have a God of his own—make it out of a beast, or fashion it out of stone with a chisel, or hew down a tree, and fashion into some grotesque shape what he reserved from the fire. As the sun can darken, so it can dry. God's blessings, which all surrounding nature furnishes to man, are the very things which he takes to dry himself up into a being divested of every human sympathy. Not only Godward, but manward also, he thus becomes parched and barren. This was the process that was going on in Tyre: the process that makes men misers or usurers, and sometimes prodigals also for the *luxury* of prodigality—drawing remorselessly from others the means which they scatter again with lavish hands. This is what characterized Tyre, which God decrees shall in the end be just what it has made itself, a sun-dry cliff; or, as He puts it otherwise, a mere place of the spreading of nets; the device of poverty to lay hold upon the living being of which it makes merchandise.

[1] The date of the prophecy is in the eleventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity, on the first of the month; the month itself, if we have the true text here, not being given. What can we make of this eleventh year? Is it characterized by not being yet the full twelve, which speaks of the manifest government of God that shall be? In fact, all this judgment of which Ezekiel speaks, falls short of the full end which prophecy for the most part contemplates, though here assuredly there is the shadow of this. The blow has fallen upon Jerusalem, and Tyre is quite ready to take advantage of it. Proud of her position and counting upon her many sources of strength, she can sit apart, hoping to profit by that which she does not dread. But, as God declares to her, it is but a vain dream. The many nations whom she has seen constantly coming to *replenish* her, are now come up *against* her with the resistless force of the waves of the sea, to overtop her defences, destroy her walls, and break down her towers. She that hath so often profited by the spoil of the nations, shall be in turn a spoil for the

2 (7 14): The instrument of destruction.

2 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [t]bring from the north, against Tyre, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, the king of kings, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and an assemblage and much people. He shall [u]slay with the sword thy daughters in the field; and he shall make [v]forts against thee, and cast up a mound against thee, and raise up the buckler against thee; and he shall set his [w]battering engines against thy walls, and with his weapons shall he break down thy towers. By reason of the [x]abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee; thy walls shall [y]shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels and of the chariots, when he shall enter through thy gates as one entereth into a city wherein a breach is made. With the [z]hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets; he shall [a]slay thy people with the sword, and the [b]pillars of thy strength shall go down to the ground. And they shall make a [c]spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy wares; and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy [d]pleasant houses; and they shall [e]lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the waters. And I will

t ch. 28. 7. ch.29.18–20. *cf.* ch.30.10, 11. *cf.* ch.32.11, 12. *cf.* Jer. 27. 6–8.
u ver. 6.
v cf. ch.21.22.
w cf. Jer. 32. 24.
x cf. Jer.47.3.
y cf. ver. 15. *cf.* Nah.2.3.
z Is. 5. 28. *cf.* Hab.1.8.
a ver. 6.
b cf. Is. 26. 5.
c ver 5. ch. 27. 3,etc.
d cf. Is.32.13, etc. *cf.* Amos 5. 11.
e cf. Is.13.11. *cf.* Is. 25. 12.

nations; and the judgment of God, carrying further the judgment of man, as her history has fully shown, declares itself in that which has been fully accomplished: "I will scrape her dust from her, and make her a bare rock. She shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah." And her doom is to be the declaration of Jehovah's name—the Name which she has despised.

2 In the first place the instrument of Tyre's destruction is declared to be Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon; but we must not confound with this the full end which Jehovah Himself makes of her, as in the 14th verse. The siege by Nebuchadrezzar was the beginning of the end. There was a revival after this, however, and another siege by the Grecian king Alexander. This brought down her strength effectually, although the remnant of a city remained for a long time, more and more wasting and drying up until the end was reached, when, as we see to-day, nothing but a bare rock was left, used for the spreading of nets only. Nebuchadrezzar is here, however, as all through this part of Ezekiel, the special instrument of the divine judgment.

The name is striking enough in connection with his own history, meaning "the god Nebo's prince;" Nebo being worshiped in Babylon as the interpreter of the gods—answering to the Greek Mercury. The word Nebo is but a form of the Hebrew *nabi*, "the prophet," and this strikingly connects with the heathen wise men's utter failure to interpret to Nebuchadrezzar the divinely-sent dream which Daniel alone was able to make known. Thus the discredit of Nebo was complete, and this witness of God to Nebuchadrezzar was natural and necessary for one whom God was taking up, in His dealings with the nations around, to make him himself the interpreter of the divine mind as to them; thus out of the dark north was the light to break out, but only as the flash from the storm-cloud. The proper meaning of divine revelation could not be given through him, as is plain; it belonged rather to those who were now under the rod for

cause the [f]noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make thee a [g]bare rock; thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets; thou shalt be [h]built no more: for I Jehovah have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

3 (15 21): Realizations at the fall of Tyre.

[3] Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to Tyre: Shall not the isles [i]shake at the sound of thy fall when the wounded groan, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? And all the [j]princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay aside their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall [k]clothe themselves with trembling, they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble [every] moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a [l]lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed that wast [m]inhabited from the seas, the [n]renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, who caused their [o]terror to be on all that haunt it! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: When I shall make thee a [p]desolate city like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and the great [q]waters shall cover thee, then will I bring thee down with them that go down to the [r]pit, to the people of old time, and will make thee to dwell in the lower parts of the earth, in places desolate of old,* with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I will set [s]glory in the land of the living. And I will make thee a terror, and thou

* Or, "like places long desolated."

f *cf.* Is.14.11. *cf.* Jer 7.34. *cf.* Jer.16.9. *cf.* Hos 2.11.
g ver. 4. *cf.* Mt. 11. 20-23.
h *cf.* Mal.1.4.

i ver. 18. ch 27.28,35. ch. 31. 16. ch. 32. 10.
j ch.27.29-36 Is. 14. 9, etc.

k *cf.* Ps. 132. 18. *cf.* Ex. 15. 14 16.
l *cf.* Rev. 18. 11, 19.
m *cf.* Rev.18. 19. ch. 27. 25. *ctr.* Is. 60. 5.
n ch. 27. 3. *cf.* Is. 23. 4, 5, 8.
o *cf.* ch.32.27.

p ver. 12, etc. *ctr.* Is. 62. 11, 12.
q ver. 3.

r ch.32.18-32. *cf.* Lk.10.15.

s *cf.* ch. 28. 25, 26 with Is. 4. 5. *cf.* ch. 39. 25-29.

their sins, yet the recipients of promises which should be, and shall be, fulfilled when Babylon and all that has succeeded it should have passed away.

In the meantime no effectual resistance was possible; it only rendered the destruction of those that opposed themselves more complete. As the prophet speaks here, the breach in Tyre had already been made for him by their sins. Her stones, her timber and her dust were now to be laid in the midst of the waters; the noise of her songs was to cease, and all her pomp and glory were to perish together. As already said, however, the complete end would wait for many generations.

[3] The lessons of such a fall need hardly be dwelt upon. They are felt instinctively by all that are in the presence of them, while, as unwelcome, they are dismissed as quickly as possible. The lessons of God's school are too humiliating to man to be welcomed by him. He may perforce accept the sentence of condemnation upon himself, and the passing away of all the false glory which he would fain make true, but cannot. The sentence of God is upon it; but, as He says here, that He may set true glory in the land of the living. The earth is at present little like this; it is rather the sepulchre of the dead; what man conceives as glory is largely that of those who have been in an eminent way the

2 (xxvii.): Its means of revenue and dissolution.
1 (1-11): Its sources of greatness.

shalt be no more; and thou shalt be [t]sought for, and shalt never be found again forever, saith the Lord Jehovah.

2. [1]And the [u]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying: And thou, son of man, take up a [v]lamentation for Tyre, and say unto Tyre: O thou that dwellest at

[t] ch. 27. 36. ch. 28. 19.
[u] ch. 26. 1, etc.
[v] ver. 32. ch. 26. 17. *cf.* Amos 5. 1.

destroyers of mankind. Blessed be God, all this has indeed to pass away; that which can be shaken is to be removed, in order that that which cannot be shaken may remain, and our kingdom is in that which cannot be shaken.

2. We have now an analysis of all the sources of greatness such as we see in Tyre, together with the announcement of its bereavement and desolation; in fact, its own rowers bringing it into the deep waters in which it is to find shipwreck. It is a picture which God has put before us in much detail, and had we eyes to see more into it, we should assuredly realize its meaning for ourselves; for while Tyre itself has passed away, no one can doubt that it has had many successors in the generations following, and that to-day the world is largely characterized by what we find in it. There are certain characteristics about it also which naturally enlist men's sympathies. Tyre was not a great conqueror as Assyria or Babylon. It does not express to us the despotic tyranny of man over man which we see so much of in the history of the world. The activities that we find in it have very much the character of ministry to the need of others; they are employed in making the best of all man's resources and spreading abroad everywhere the products of his hands and of his intellect. The merchants are in our day more and more realized as the princes of the earth, and the rule of commerce is looked at very much as meaning the rule of civilization and the elevation of the nations generally to more equality, causing the brotherhood of man to be more realized in that which gives each his place in service to the common good. It does not take deep looking into it to realize that it is self-interest which stirs everywhere in it, a motive which is at once intensely powerful and readily communicating itself also to others. Persuade a man that it is his own interest that you are seeking—how readily in general will he be accessible to such a motive! And in this sense only it is a civilizer as prompting men to follow that which is to be personal gain, and thus spreading abroad a civilization which, however, has been reached in another way. And the gain must be of a sort which the lowest can realize. However man may value intellect, with the mass, appeals to the intellect in any other way than personal gain have very little power. They are comparatively few who are much moved by intellectual appeals, save as it can be shown that it may be made to minister to the gratification of the lower senses. Religion again is that which it is evident should be most powerful in its appeal to man; and it is true that almost everywhere man's conscience responds to it. You do not find in the masses the casting off of God, but, on the other hand, you do not find in the masses anything like a spirit of real obedience to Him. He will make his bow, and go his own way; or he will give his money, and pay a good price to be allowed to do so; but a real religious nation has yet to be found.

Yet, after all, in the revelation of God to man's conscience is found the true springs of power for the proper development of man as man, such as is alone worth speaking of as civilization. Here, mind and heart go together, and under its influence is developed a man, not a monster. Here the mind of man

fully wakes up, as we may see if we will, in the track of light which the Bible leaves behind it wherever it has been. What would not we attain were we only true with the truth and to Him who gave it to us! But we are not, alas! The children of light are everywhere but a small minority; and more than this, alas, as we have divine authority for saying, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." These can concentrate themselves without distraction upon objects which appeal to them in the deepest way, and the power of worldly interests over the people of God themselves may well assure us, if we need any assurance, of what they must be to those with whom they are their all. The light once introduced will be true to its own nature; and as all the fruits of the earth develop only under the light of heaven, so the mind of man awakened by the truth manifests its God-given power in a way which wakes up others, who nevertheless are not themselves truly under its influence. These can discern just so much as serves their worldly interests, and even pursue further in this direction what those truly wiser let slip in mere carelessness out of their hands. And thus it is that unbelief can assert to-day that natural science belongs to it, while it gives at the same time that peculiar twist which turns it into the enemy of the truth itself.

So Christianity has manifested itself in such a way that to-day the great powers of the earth have become "Christian nations." Yet this must be read in another way that it may be seen in its rightful aspect. Alas, we must say, that the "Christian" powers have become powers of *the earth*. Everywhere, what we see is, that instead of the grace which is really the Christian spirit—the grace which grace has taught and which makes gracious, the spirit of self-sacrifice for others, such as the cross is the great example of—there is in fact in every kingdom of the earth to-day the spirit of gain, the opposite of self-sacrifice, everywhere dominant. Men may talk of altruism in the same way as heathen philosophers themselves could read excellent moral lessons to their pupils, but if you expect the practice you must be sanguine indeed. We must expect nothing of this sort in the mass until Christ comes, or that any other principle will rule the world save the Canaanitish principle which is exemplified here in Tyre—of selfish gain. No doubt, with it all, a certain progress results; certain fruits even of Christianity itself, though plucked half-ripened from that which they grew upon, are made available to a continually increasing number, while the fruits of intellect merely are still more made to serve, as they are amply able to serve, the lust of acquirement. The way in which the Spirit of God in Ezekiel dwells upon all this in the prophecy before us, may assure us of what interest it should have for us in following it out; yet how little has been the interest! Commentators are mostly content to point out what has been plain enough upon the surface, how all the treasures of the earth are heaped up in Tyre, and how all the nations around are made to minister to her; little more indeed do they give us except scraps of geography and history, which may be good enough for the historian, but which for the prophet, we may be sure, could have little that was attractive. What we do find here is certainly a moral and spiritual analysis of what so much constitutes the world of to-day, the world of mammon; and if we profit rightly by it, we must look into our own hearts and search out what is there, for the lusts of the flesh are native to us, alas, and "all that is in the world," as the apostle tells us, is "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind."

the [w]entry of the sea, trafficker with the peoples in [z]many isles, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Thou hast said, O Tyre, I am [y]perfect in beauty. Thy borders are in the [z]heart of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. Of cypresses* of [a]Senir they have made all thy planks; [b]cedars from Lebanon have they taken to make masts for thee. Of the

* The ordinary word for firs, but which would include the cypress; for which Senir was noted (Sirach 24: 13).

[w] ch. 26. 17. Is. 23. 2.
[x] vers. 12, etc. Is. 23 8, 11. *cf.* Rev. 18. 3, etc.
[y] vers. 4, 10, 11. *cf.* ch. 28. 12. *ctr.* Ps. 50. 2. *cf.* Is. 23. 9.
[z] ch. 26. 5.
[a] *cf.* Deut. 3. 9.
[b] *cf.* 1 Ki. 5. 1, 6; *cf.* Ps. 104. 16.

[1] The ship is used allegorically here as picturing Tyre for us, a most natural figure, which we use still when we speak of the "ship of state," thinking in this of the needed power and skill that must be put forth in human effort to make it prosper, to catch favoring winds and avoid shoals and rocks. We should surely expect to find this vividly pictured here, and the moral character of things brought out; this state in Tyre, being a commercial one, having its true image, therefore, in every vessel sailing from its port. We may say that man has been working at this ship ever since, doing his best to perfect its beauty; and how attractive it may be we realize in the exhibitions which it is continually affording us of all the productions of nature and of man which it brings together, and, as it were, embodies in itself the restless, ever-craving spirit of man, the untiring energy which works in him.

We have the materials of the vessel first, from which we go on to see the character of the crew that mans it; then its merchandise, the prizes which it holds up to others and for which it works itself.

We have first the material of the vessel's frame-work: "Of cypresses of Senir they have made all thy planks. Cedars from Lebanon have they taken to make masts for thee." The word for "cypresses" is not confined to what we now call cypress; it would apply to the whole fir tribe to which the cypresses belong, but Senir or Hermon was in fact renowned for these (Sirach xxiv. 13), and their wood was of the best for the kind of work contemplated here. Hermon designated here by its Amorite name, means, as we have seen elsewhere, "the ban," the exterminating curse upon evil. It was the mountain which, with its white dome, dominated the land of Israel, and from which, in most expressive connection, the river Jordan, the river of death, ran down to the sea of judgment, the salt sea. It was that which marked out the tenure upon which Israel held the land, as seen in the extermination of the Canaanite out of it, which was the preservation of that awful purity of which its dome, rising like a great white throne above all else, naturally spoke. Notable it seems that Senir, the Amorite name, should be used here instead of Hermon. Senir is said to mean "cuirass," "coat of mail," from *senar*, "to clang, clatter," a notable comment, as it seems, of the Amorite talker upon that Israelitish ban. Senir, then, furnishes the funereal cypress as material for the ship of Tyre. No wonder if the issue is a funeral!

Lebanon, which means "white," is the *range* of which Hermon is the southern point; the same image would suggest the same solemn thought. This furnishes the cedar-masts upon which is hoisted the sail to carry the ship of commerce forward in its career. From Bashan come the oars, as the propelling force which alone could be duly trusted in those days: a strength not derived from God, but from native energy—"well fed," as was proverbial of that which came

[c] oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; they made thy rudder of [d] ivory inlaid in pine* from the isles of Chittim. Of fine linen with broidered work from [e] Egypt was thy sail †, to serve thee for an [f] ensign;

c *cf.* Is. 2. 13. *cf.* Zech. 11. 2.
d *cf.* Gen. 10. 4. *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 18. ver. 15.
e 1 Ki. 10. 28. *cf.* Is. 19. 9.
f *cf.* Ps. 74. 4. *ctr.* Is. 59. 19.

* A peculiar and difficult sentence: hatches, deck, benches, have all been suggested instead of rudder; and cedar or boxwood instead of pine. † Or, "was spread forth."

from Bashan. We need not wonder to find human energy emphasized in this way, almost at the outset.

After the oars comes the rudder, as the word probably means, though there is a doubt about it; but we would not expect it to be left out, as otherwise must be the case. The steering of a vessel is surely of the first importance; it must have lessons for us if lessons there be everywhere here. The word used, however, is *keresh*, "planking." A specific word for "rudder" there does not seem to be in the Hebrew. It is taken here collectively by most, perhaps, either for the benches for the rowers, or for the deck; but, in connection with what has immediately preceded it, this view would have little apparent significance. The suggestion that it is the thick plankwork which forms the scaffold of the mast, argues no better for our purpose. Meyer suggests "table-work, wainscoting for the laying out of the ship." It is Rashi who suggests "the helm," which, says Schroeder, "recommends itself more than the others, on account of its importance for the vessel and its suitableness in respect to the adorning that follows." There is some difficulty also in connection with this, but it is generally taken as meaning that it was of ivory inlaid in pine, box-wood, or cedar. That some kind of wood is intended, is obvious, and the word for it seems to intimate what is straight, as pine or cedar would be. It being from the isles of Chittim also, that is, from Cyprus, reminds us that the Cyprian pines were especially noted as ship-building material.

All this is serviceable for us, mainly in ascertaining, if we may, the spiritual significance; and if Chittim be Cyprus, as is generally allowed, then it stands for all that is fair and lovely in nature, the sweet influences which are apt to rule the heart, rigorously enough it may be, and be to it what Chittim means, "the breakers down," destroying the true response of the heart to Him from whom all natural blessings come. But how such influences do guide, in one way or another, the course of the ship of commerce, while there are master-needs indeed which must be met, and which must in a certain sense control. Yet how much there is of ministry to *pleasure* merely, and to luxury! How much of all the material of trade goes to this end! And the guidance of the ship must be accordingly.*

Next, we have either the sail or ensign, or most probably the sail which is at the same time the ensign; and this gives the fullest moral significance. Egypt provides for this the fine linen, which everywhere speaks of practical righteousness—necessarily here as the *world* recognizes it; while it is ostentatiously put forth as "embroidered," to attract the eye. Your personal interests, it would say, are to be cared for with all uprightness, and here is something quite need-

* This influence of the pleasant, gentle and soft as a guide, is seen in the loosing of the ship in which Paul was carried as a prisoner to Rome, from Fair Havens, when "the *south wind blew softly*" (Acts 27: 8, etc.). Such a "rudder" or guide resulted in the disastrous voyage and shipwreck of the ecclesiastical vessel of which the ship was a type.—S. R.

blue and purple from the isles of [g]Elishah was thine awning. The inhabitants of [h]Zidon and [i]Arvad were thy rowers; thy [j]wise men, O Tyre, were in thee, they were thy pilots. The elders of [k]Gebal and the wise men thereof were repairing thy leaks; all the [l]ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to barter with thee. [m]Persia and Lud and Phut were in thine

g cf. 1 Chr. 1. 7.
h cf. Gen. 10. 15.
cf. ch. 28. 21.
i cf. Gen. 10. 18.
ver. 11.
j cf. 1 Ki. 5. 6.
cf. 1 Ki. 9. 27.
k Ps. 83. 7.
l cf. Rev. 18. 19. *m* ch. 38. 5; ch. 30. 5; *cf.* Gen. 10. 6; *cf.* Is. 66. 19.

ful to enable the vessel at the same time to catch the wind and minister to its own. Is it not, in fact, for its own interests to serve yourself? How can you sever these? Thus you have the best possible security that your interests will be served. This interweaving of argument is often very elaborate, as we know.

Last of all here the good ship needs a covering, and the idea is, to protect it from the sun. The isles of Elishah furnish this in the purple colors, which speak of earthly dominion, whether this may refer to the powers of the world, whose protection she may fairly claim as servant to all their interests, or whether it refer to the claim of dominion on her own part, her power rooting itself so firmly as it does in the interests of the many. In the language of the day, she is abundantly insured in this way; but, whether it be the men or the measures by which she insures herself, how much its motto finds adoption in the principle held secretly, if not openly, that "God has forgotten." This seems to be the meaning of Elishah here; and is not this the secret of the abundant care which everywhere the world must take of itself?—that which the serpent taught man in Eden; and the question as to God once raised, man's hand is immediately lifted to pluck for himself the fruit, though forbidden. That "God helps those who help themselves" means, in the ear of faith, that God can be trusted no more.

Next comes the manning of the vessel, in which, significantly, Zidon, "the taker of prey," and Arvad, "the runner loose," are the rowers. She will often have to trust this human energy and skill when the winds of heaven will do nothing for her. The motives and the character indicated do not commend themselves to heaven; so we need not wonder. The master-mind, the controlling power is that of Tyre herself. We have the repairers next; very necessary indeed when human machinery is so constantly wearing out. These are the elders of Gebal, from a word which means "to plait," "combine," "twist together." Plenty of this work has to be done for the stopping of leaks and much else in this way. Finally, we see in this ship of trade how common interests, as it is boasted, bring the world together. "All the ships of the sea" are in her, as if all were one vessel to serve her purposes and to carry on the civilization of the world upon the ground of the common brotherhood of man and the conservation of the universal good.

Yet the vessel of commerce must be prepared for the conflict also, and it has many a battle to fight. And we see her armament for this: First of all, Pharas (Persia), "division," reminding us of the old motto, "Divide and conquer"—a very reliable one, surely. Next we have Lud (not the Shemite of Gen. x. 22, but the Mizraimite or Egyptian of Gen. x. 13), which may mean, as it is taken to mean, "strife." Thus if Pharas speaks of manœuvering and diplomacy, Lud speaks of preparation for more open war; while Put (or Phut) is given either as "trampling down," or else "despising," or "rejection." One may be tempted to think here of the crowding out of all separate interests of those who

army, thy men of war: they [n]hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they gave thee splendor. The children of [o]Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadim were on thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about, they perfected thy beauty.

[n] ver. 11. *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 16, 17. *cf.* 2 Chron. 12. 9-11.
[o] ver. 8.

do not belong to the combination which trade favors and which favors trade, a thing for which, in its extreme form, "boycotting" is the name to-day. Then the sons of Arvad are seen upon the walls round about, a careless and unscrupulous crowd, while the Gammadim, who are in her towers, may be "guards," as the Septuagint calls them, and thus speak of the constant spirit of watchfulness which in all this and at all times has to be maintained. This would give a consistent sense, but there are other conjectures which seem only that.

[2] Now, as to the merchandise. What can be said of it for edification, which all Scripture is to serve? Is it a mere catalogue, an inventory of where, as a matter of history, she found the goods with which she traded, and of the goods themselves? Little else seems ever to have been made of it, but are we not warranted to seek for something more? Certainly the difficulties are greater here than elsewhere, and any interpretation that may be proffered will doubtless be stamped as visionary by the many who shrink from allegory with the aversion that Israel themselves had to Ezekiel's parables. Yet if the choice is to be between an absolute giving up of such scriptures as these, or seeking in them what we are positively assured all Scripture has (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17), what is the position for faith to take? Plenty of difficulties there are, of course. What we have here is, upon the surface, just a catalogue of lands or peoples with their produce with which they traded, and there seems no *moral* element in them, nor in the fact of the trading either. We are indeed to buy the truth and not to sell it; but this is not in question here. The wares embraced otherwise all kinds of material; for what is there a man will not sell who will sell his soul to satisfy the craving of a moment? To how much of all this should we be able to assign a spiritual meaning that shall stand the test of sober, judicial reflection? And if mistakes are too many or too serious, will it not cast doubt upon the whole inquiry? Yet, with all this, it would seem to some less serious than to own that in the word of God there are large portions here and there to which no spiritual meaning can be assigned—portions which might vanish entirely from the pages they occupy, and Scripture be rather bettered for their absence. If they are *not* "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," then why should they be found in the word of God at all?—which is not a mere history, but *God's word*, to which we must neither add, nor diminish from it.

Coming now to consider the commerce of Tyre and what it represents for us, we find Tarshish coming first and last in the list, apparently giving character to the whole. It is important therefore to know just what Tarshish means. The derivation is mostly understood to be from *rashash*, "to break down," or if in the *hiphil*, "to cause to break down;" but the word is usually taken as a noun, and as meaning "fortress," which involves another and apparently altogether conjectural meaning of *rashash*. The "breaker down" seems also to give nothing that plainly connects with what we have here. On the other hand, Tarshish may be a compound word, the first syllable from the verb *tur*, "to go

2 (12-25): Its commercial activity.

2 [p] Tarshish traded with thee by reason of the abundance of all kinds of riches: with [q] silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded for thy wares. [r] Javan, [s] Tubal and

p ch. 38. 13. *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 22, etc.
q *cf.* Is. 60. 9. *cf.* Jer. 10. 9.
r Gen. 10. 2, 4; *cf.* Dan. 8. 21. s *cf.* ch. 32. 26; *cf.* ch. 38. 2, 3.

about," and thus "to explore," "search out," or even sometimes "to traffic." The second syllable may then be *shesh*, which means "white marble" or "white linen," the common element of which plainly is "white," or as it is suggested, "shining;" and here we find what at first sight seems singularly in keeping with all that is before us.

Tarshish was the second son of Javan, as Javan was the fourth son of Japheth, the typical Gentile by whose seed the isles of the Gentiles were divided. Javan is thus in character the wanderer from God, as the Gentile plainly was. There is not in him the positive opposition that we find in the sons of Ham, and in Noah's prophecy the two are widely distinguished in God's ways of dealing with them. "God will make room for Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem"—a partaker of the revelation of which Shem is the depositary. But in the meanwhile he is away from God, busy and making room for himself. He spreads abroad unfettered; but Javan, whose name in its root-meaning gives the thought of "boiling," "bubbling," or "fermentation," seems akin to *yayin*, "wine." Greece,* which Javan confessedly represents, was the land of wine, given over to the worship of Bacchus; and in its light-heartedness, its poetry, and even its philosophy, bears witness of a kind of intoxication of spirit which would answer to the name.

Javan's first-born is Elishah, "God has forgotten," which is always the thought in a soul which has forgotten Him. His second son is Tarshish; and, according to what has been already said as to the derivation, naturally speaks of one who goes out from the presence of God, a seeker on his own account, attracted by everything that is shining or conspicuous. He is seeking to satisfy himself with that which never satisfied any; but thus we can understand the energy that he puts into it, so that he is the ideal explorer, and the riches of the earth become his own. He has, as we see here, silver, the current money of the merchant; iron, the great material for manufacturing implements, and we have had enough talk about "the iron age," to recognize what it stands for. Then he has tin, which is literally "alloy," and which, however serviceable for men's ends, is in Scripture described as impurity, as much that seems very serviceable surely is. Lastly we have lead, which in Scripture scarcely stands for anything but dross or weight. There is no gold in this catalogue; but, on the other hand, while not noticed in this connection, there is in Tarshish a precious stone which we have had before us as the topaz, and which gives a similitude for the wheels of the cherubic vision. That it should not be noticed in this connection seems striking here. It is not part of his merchandise. Is it not rather a witness from God to himself? For with all his eager hunt after something that will satisfy, the stamp of vanity is upon it all, as the topaz wheel bears witness. How plain indeed the moral, and how significant, even, that it should be omitted here! Just the one thing, one might say, omitted from the inventory of the wealth of Tarshish. But Tarshish is the foremost contributor to Tyre's commerce, and gives, as what is introductory mostly does in Scripture, the character of all that follows. Here is the restless spirit of one

* Literally, "*Ionia.*"—S. R.

Meshech, they were thy traffickers: they bartered with thee the [t]persons of men * and vessels of bronze. They of the house of [u]Togarmah traded for thy wares with [v]horses and steeds † and mules. The sons of [w]Dedan were thy traffickers: many [x]isles were the mart of thy hand: they brought thee in exchange ‡ horns of [y]ivory and ebony. [z]Syria was thy merchant for the multitude of thy handiworks: § they traded for thy wares with [a]carbuncles, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, ‖ and rubies. [b]Judah

* Lit., "Soul of man." † Or, "riders." ‡ Or, "As a present."
§ Lit., "works." ‖ Lit., "Precious things."

t cf. Rev. 18. 13.
cf. Joel 3. 3.
u Gen. 10. 3. ch. 38. 6.
v cf. Is. 31. 1, etc.
w ver. 20. Gen. 10. 7. Gen. 25. 3. Jer. 49. 8.
x cfr. Is. 60 9.
y 1 Ki. 10. 22. *cf.* Rev. 18. 12.
z Gen. 10. 22. *cf.* Gen. 28. 5.
a cf. ch. 28. 13.
b cf. Acts 12. 20.

adrift from God—a prodigal. How often are "the substantial gains of commerce," as they are called, but prodigal wasting of the Father's goods!

We have Javan next, with Tubal and Meshech, who belong to the same order, and are indeed brethren. Tubal means "issue." Tubal-Cain is but another Cain, a continuation of the one who first sought to take possession of the earth and build his city there. We may remember Tubal-Cain as the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, who thus contributes to the civilization of the city which Cain has built. A similar thought we have in Ahab, whose name means "brother of his father," again one in whom heredity clearly holds its place and shows its full value. Thus Tubal here. Meshech, elsewhere associated with him in Scripture, means "a drawing out," as of seed from the basket of the sower; hence, "a sowing." In connection, the two together look backward and forward; they tell—how surely!—as the beginning so shall be the end. Not that there is not progress; there truly is; but progress in this way, and in fallen man, is scarcely to be boasted in. So we find these three sellers here with their vessels of brass and human chattels also. We shall see how prominent these are in the great confederacy against Jehovah and Israel of which Ezekiel speaks later.

We have next Togarmah, which no doubt is Armenia, the third son of Gomer, Ashkenaz and Riphath being the other two. None of the three is known as to its derivation, and only Togarmah as the people for whom it stands. This vagueness makes all else about it doubtful for our purpose.

Next we have the sons of Dedan, which, if it has the meaning we have before ascribed to it, is of that "progress," such as it is, which the world can show. It is remarkable that what they trade in is in general what is used for purposes of veneer—an outside which does not truly indicate what is beneath. How much of what is called education goes for this, and how much of what is counted civilization consists in it!

Next we have Aram, child of Shem though he is, but fallen from the blessedness of this, and who, instead of speaking of Him whom God constantly exalts, and finding his own exaltation in Him, has learned the fatal habit of self-exaltation (see Judges iii. 8, *Notes*); and who, enriched with many a precious thing from the divine goodness, would fain exchange them for Tyre's manufactured articles. *Nophek*, here, from a word which means "to blow up a fire," is thought to mean a precious stone of a glowing, ruddy hue, probably a carbuncle; thus it may speak of what One who suffered in the fire has produced in glory to God.

and the land of Israel, they were thy traffickers: they bartered with thee [c]wheat of Minnith, and sweet cakes, and [d]honey, and oil, and balm. [e]Damascus dealt with thee because of the multitude of thy handiworks,* by reason of the abundance of all kinds of riches, with [f]wine of Helbon, and white wool. Vedan and Javan of Uzal traded for thy wares with wrought iron; [g]cassia and calamus were among thy merchandise. Dedan was thy trafficker in [h]coverings spread

c *cf.* Deut. 8. 8.
d *cf.* Ex. 3. 8.
e Gen. 15. 2, etc.
f *cf.* Hos. 14. 7.
g *cf.* Ex. 30. 23, 24.
h *cf.* Lev. 15. 9.

* Or, "works."

Purple speaks of the royal crown which followed the cross. Then the broidered work, which may well image the Spirit's embroidery of the new creature, far surpassing that of which the psalmist speaks (Ps. cxxxix. 15) when he applies the same word to the work of the old creation. Next we have the fine linen, which is ever in Scripture practical righteousness, or what stands for this. Then what is considered to be coral, literally, "heights" (surely not from the great price paid for it, as some suppose, but rather from its manner of growth), and which, as found in the sea, gives us heights out of the depths, as we may say; and how much more than can be expressed is implied here! Finally, we have *kadkod*, "the sparkler," another gem. Whatever it was, whether jasper, garnet, ruby, or agate, the Lord's promise to His people of making their windows "agates," shows that it was to some good extent transparent, and naturally suggests, as typical of a future blessing, the visions of glory that shall surely come. All this may be significant enough as the portion of a fallen Shemite, which, alas, he is ready to barter—for what? It is not said; and silence is surely more significant than speech—goods of Tyre's own manufacture, that is enough to say.

But Judah too is here in line with the rest; Judah too will barter her wheat of Minnith (her own "portion") and her dainties of honey and oil and balm. There needs little skill to interpret this; we need not emphasize the sorrowful way in which the people of God will barter away what is their own portion—and again, for what?

Damascus follows, as Aram preceded. It is but another form of Aram (see 2 Sam. viii. 6, *Notes*), and speaks of elevation by activity, being itself a noted place of traffic. Its contributions are the wine of Helbon, "fatness"—the stimulus of successful self-enrichment, and the whiteness of its wool which has been shorn from the sheep.

The next sentence is again more or less doubtful. The merchandise, however, speaks strongly for Arabia, and Vedan may be Aden, which, although there is no full certainty about it, has come generally to be accepted: and Aden was celebrated as a commercial emporium from very ancient times. The wrought iron may remind us, as one has suggested, of the sword-blades of Yemen, as Uzal was the ancient name of Sanaa, its capital. Cassia and calamus are also Arabian products. If Javar and Uzal both speak in different ways of man's departure from God, it may remind us of what in Scripture is devoted to Him now turned aside to self-indulgence, while the wrought iron may speak of the many inventions which man attributes to necessity as their mother, but which God attributes to his departure from original uprightness, by which he has got into necessity (Eccl. vii. 29).

out for riding. [i]Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were the merchants of thy hand: in [j]lambs, and rams, and goats, in these did they trade with thee. The merchants of [k]Sheba and Raamah were thy traffickers: they traded for thy wares with all the choice [l]spices, and with all precious stones and gold. [m]Haran, and

[i] 1 Ki. 10. 15. Jer. 25. 24.
[j] Is. 60. 7.
[k] *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 1-13.
[l] Is. 60. 6, etc.
[m] Gen. 10. 10. Gen. 11. 31, 32.

Now comes again Dedan, though probably another, the Edomite, not the Arabian; as some have thought there may be also a connection between them. That the men of what is counted "progress" should furnish riding-cloths for others than themselves is not to be wondered at, and even as Edomites they may serve Israelites in this way. God is above all the world's ways to serve their own ends, and makes them serve Himself, and thus serve His people in some ways, after all.

Arabia and Kedar, "darkness," in their meaning are connected by *ereb*, "evening," the time of darkness, and thus of mixture when the forms of darkness are abroad. Naturally enough the two peoples sell sheep and lambs, though they may often quite rightly sell goats also.

Sheba and Raamah then come together. They are remarkable as being the first Cushite or indeed Hamitic people named, with the exception probably of one of the Dedans, in whom the opposition to God and to the light may be expected fully to show itself. Accordingly we find, first, Sheba, "captor," in whom we may read the great enemy of God and man. It would be strange if he who leads men captive made no more contribution than we have seen to Tyre's merchandise. Here he makes notable contribution by his merchandise, and with him is associated Raamah, "rumbling," "trembling," "agitation," "thunder," and Raamah is the father of Sheba, while named second here. In these two names together there is as much truth as one can find in what is often said, that fear is the parent of all religion. It will be readily allowed, of course, that there is a fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, and that reverential fear is a very different thing from what these names would speak. In all heathenism and superstition fear is that which has complete control, and how much of the sway that Satan has over a soul is found in this! "We have not received the spirit of bondage unto fear," says the apostle to his fellow-Christians, but Satan, as the dread power which works by death, makes men "all their lifetime subject to bondage." Thus we can understand that Raamah is the father of Sheba here; the spirit of fear gives his place to him who holds man captive. God known, as He is in the gospel, and the soul brought into full liberty as in relationship to Him, how thoroughly and forever is the rule of Satan broken, and every form of superstition brought to an end!

It may seem strange to find here what Sheba can make merchandise of. The chief of spicery and all precious stones and gold are in the catalogue. But if this surprises us, we may look on to the book of Revelation and notice Babylon's array: "In purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand," and yet "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." But in truth, Satan is known by his selling these. He does not buy them, nor has he acquired them aright, nor will he enrich any with them. All through, he is the captor merely, and in his method, the deceiver. God does not sell; He gives. Or if He invites to buy, that is, to come to His terms about that which is to be your own, He is careful to assure us that it is "without money and without price."

Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of [n]Sheba, 'Asshur and Chilmad were thy traffickers. These traded with thee in choice wares, in wrappings of [o]blue and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords and made of cedar, among thy merchandise.* The [p]ships of Tarshish were thy caravans† for thy merchandise; and thou wast replenished, and made very [q]glorious in the heart of the seas.

3 (26-36): The transformation of its glory.

3 Thy [r]rowers have brought thee into great waters: the [s]east wind hath broken thee in the heart of the seas. Thy 'substance and thy wares, thy merchandise, thy mariners and thy pilots, they that repair thy leaks, and they that barter with thee, and all thy men of war that are in thee, with all thine assemblage which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the heart of the seas in the day of thy [u]ruin. At the sound of the cry of thy [v]pilots the open places shall shake. And all that handle the oar, the mariners, all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships; they shall stand upon the land, and shall cause their voice to be heard over thee, and shall [w]cry bitterly; and they shall cast up dust upon their heads; they shall wallow themselves in ashes. And they shall make themselves bald for thee, and gird themselves with sackcloth; and they

n *cf.* Ps. 72. 10, 15.
o *cf.* ch. 23. 6.
p *cf.* Ps. 48. 7. *cf.* Is. 2. 16.
q *cf.* Is. 23. 1-11.
r *cf.* Is. 33. 23. *cf.* Acts 27. 11, 12.
s *cf.* Jer. 18. 17.
t ch. 26. 12.
u ch. 26. 14, 21. *cf.* Is. 23. 9. *cf.* Jer. 47. 4. *cf.* Amos 1. 9, 10. *cf.* Zech. 9. 3, 4.
v ch. 26. 10, 15. *cf.* Ex. 14. 23 25.
w *cf.* Rev. 18. 17, etc. ch. 26. 16.

* This might be rendered, "Treasures of costly raiment, bound with cords and packed, among thy merchandise."
† Or, "visited thee."

Next and really last in this catalogue, we have Haran, "the parched," "the dry," but he is associated with Kanneh, "the firm," "the upright," and also with Eden, the place of "delight" lost from earth; for, alas, these are still but the merchants of Sheba, doing his work with Asshur, the Shemite, who has lost his place in connection with the revelation of God, and is wandering among the perverted traditions of men, and with Chilmad who, as the word seems to mean, points out the "*quasi* learner." Their traffic is in rich apparel, by which the nakedness of the fall is done away, nay, covered over with adornment, and of which, as we see by the carefully packed bales that are noticed here, they evidently made much.

The analysis ends here, save only that we find how that the ships of Tarshish are the one great means to unite all these together. It is all indeed the fruit of a spirit away from God, which therefore explores the earth for whatever it can make gain of, but which, nevertheless, can yield no satisfaction. All is thus united together like their bales of merchandise, by which Tyre is made for the present very glorious, but in the midst of what is the very image of instability, "in the heart of the seas."

3 Now comes the end of all this glory. The very hands by whose power the good ship has been carried on, bring her into great waters, and there the east wind of adversity breaks her helplessly "in the heart of the seas." No skilful management avails any more; no stoppage of leaks can be attempted any more. Useless are the men of war, and all that assemblage which has been gathered in and about her falls into the heart of the seas in the day of her ruin. The

shall weep for thee in bitterness of soul with bitter mourning. And in their wailing they shall take up a [x] lamentation for thee, and lament over thee [saying], Who is like Tyre, like her that is brought to [y] silence in the midst of the sea? When thy wares went forth over the seas, thou filledst many peoples; thou didst [z] enrich the kings of the earth with the abundance of thy riches and of thy merchandise. In the time that that thou art [a] broken by the seas in the depths of the waters, thy merchandise and all thine assemblage in the midst of thee have fallen. All the [b] inhabitants of the isles are astonished at thee, and their kings are horribly afraid; their countenance is troubled. The merchants among the peoples [c] hiss at thee; thou art become a [d] terror, and thou shalt never be any more.

3 (xxviii. 1-10): The prince who glorifies himself as God.

3. And the [e] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the [f] prince of Tyre, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thy heart is [g] lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a [h] god, I sit in the seat of God, in the heart of the seas—and thou art a [i] man, and not God—and thou settest thy heart as the heart of God: behold, thou art [j] wiser than Daniel; nothing secret

x ch. 26. 17. ch. 32. 10. *cf.* Rev. 18. 9, etc. *cf.* Is. 16. 9. *cf.* Lam. 1. 12. *cf.* Lam. 2. 13.
y ch. 26. 4, 5. *cf.* Jer. 16. 9. *cf.* Is 15. 1.
z *cf.* Rev. 18. 3, etc.
a ver. 26. ch. 26. 19-21.
b Is. 23. 5, 6.
c *cf.* Jer. 18. 16. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 15.
d ch. 26. 21.
e ch. 27. 1, etc.
f *cf.* ver. 12. *cf.* Jno. 14. 30.
g vers. 5, 17. ch. 31. 10. Deut. 8. 14. *cf.* Dan. 4. 30, 37.
h *cf.* Gen. 3. 5. *cf.* Acts 12. 22, 23. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3, 4.
i *cf.* Ps. 9. 20; *cf.* Is. 31. 3; *cf.* Is. 40. 18-23.
j Dan. 1. 20; Dan. 2. 22, 23; Dan. 5. 11, 12.

cry of the pilots is only one of despair; the open places of the land that might give her refuge, are themselves shaking, and shut out hope, and those who stand afar off in fear for her judgment only recall the glory of the past as those who fain would be incredulous that it is past. So full of help to many, so abundant in the riches continually being distributed, all the inhabitants of the isles are astonished and their kings are horribly afraid, their countenance is troubled. Where shall any find a security that Tyre has not found? All this lamentation is sealed by one single and emphatic word from God: "Thou art become a terror, and thou shalt never be any more."

3. We have now an address to the prince of Tyre, in which we see the effect upon him of the abundance of wealth gathered together and the power implied by this, exalting his heart to a place more than human. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Because thy heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the heart of the seas; and thou art a man and not God, and thou settest thy heart as the heart of God." Monstrous as all this may be, it is yet, after all, the natural development of what took place in the Garden of Eden itself, when the temptation presented by the evil one was distinctly, "Ye shall be as God." No doubt this was to be a moral likeness—"knowing good and evil;" nevertheless, it was a place usurped, not given by God, and naturally leading to still more open and extreme usurpation. We see in it apparently also reminiscences of the dealings which we know Tyre had had with Israel in Solomon's time, when she had been permitted to contribute to the temple of God in Jerusalem. Solomon sat, as the inspired Word says, "on the throne of Jehovah in Israel" (1 Chron. xxix. 23), His representative in that place. This representative place was given him from God Himself. The prince of Tyre takes it in a carnal fashion, and in independence. With him it is no mere representative authority which might, in the fear of God, be realized by

have they hidden from thee; by thy wisdom and by thine understanding thou hast gotten thee [k]riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures; for thy great wisdom thou hast by thy traffic increased thy riches, and thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thou hast set thy heart as the heart of God, therefore, behold, I will [l]bring strangers upon thee, the terrible ones of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall [m]tarnish thy brightness. They shall bring thee [n]down to the pit, and thou shalt die the death of those that are slain in the heart of the seas. Wilt thou [o]yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? But thou art man, and not God, in the hand of him that pierceth* thee. Thou shalt die the death of the uncircumcised by the hands of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

k *cf.* Hab. 1. 15, 16. *cf.* Zech. 9. 2–4.

l ch. 26. 7–14. *cf.* Is. 23. 8, 9. *cf.* ch. 30. 11.

m *cf.* vers. 15–17. *cf.* Is. 2. 11, 12. *cf.* Is. 23. 9.

n *cf.* ch. 32. 18–30. *ctr.* Is. 38. 17.

o ver. 2. *cf.* Dan. 4. 31, 32.

* Or, "defileth."

any of those "powers that be," of whom the apostle speaks as "ordained of God," so that obedience to the power becomes for the believer obedience to God Himself. In Tyre there was no such sense of responsibility, but the language is according to what we find concerning one who in the last days shall himself sit in the temple of God, "showing himself that he is God." It is the language of Antichrist, of whom the prince of Tyre here is, no doubt, to some extent, a shadow. But what is Antichrist himself except the full manifestation of fallen manhood, with the restraint upon it which God is exercising now, removed, so that the depths of the heart come out? Who that lifts himself up against God but becomes God to himself, in fact, robbing God of the glory which He will not give to another? Incredible it might indeed seem that any could go to the full length of what is here, when manifestly, as he is reminded, he is but a man—and what a *nothing* is man before God, even the wisest! As to his wisdom amongst men, no doubt he might claim much as searcher out of the secrets of all the earth, and knowing how to use for his purposes all that he acquired. He was "wiser than Daniel," as the prophet says to him; and, as we see, the wisdom of Daniel had reached far already in those days. Daniel had shown himself wise as to the secrets of a monarch's chamber, and could interpret to him the thoughts of his heart, nevertheless it left Daniel in the place of entire subordination to the king to whom he ministered. Here was one who had learned to use his wisdom in his own behalf, to give *himself* a place amongst men, a greatness which was merely acquired, however, neither innate nor moral, and therefore no real greatness in the sight of God. He had gathered riches into his treasury and continually was increasing them, but to debase himself morally in a way that he was not competent even to estimate. He is incapable of receiving God's judgment of things as they really are, and thus God would have to teach him by men like himself, with a lesson of the sword, marring all his beauty and bringing his brightness to an end. God needed to put forth no manifest divine power against him, the power of men was enough. Would he maintain an argument for his own divinity in the face of the weapons of those who would put him to death? Uncircumcised as he was, having never

tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee; in the day that thou wast [u]created they were prepared. Thou wast the anointed covering [v]cherub, and I had set thee [so]: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou didst walk up and down in the [w]midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast [x]perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till [y]unrighteousness was found in thee. By the abundance of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore have I [z]cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and have destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart

u ver. 15. *cf.* Col. 1.16. *cf.* Phil. 2. 10, 11.
v cf. Ex. 25. 17-20. *cf.* Gen. 3.24.
w cf. Ex. 19. 18. *cf.* Ps. 18. 7-10. *cf.* Is 6.1-4.
x vers. 3-5, 12. *cf.* ch. 27. 3.
y cf. Jude 6.9. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2.4. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3.6.
z cf. Is. 14. 12 15.

cf. Lk. 10. 18 with Rev. 12. 8, 9; *cf.* Heb. 2. 14.

man took the coals of fire to scatter over the city in judgment for the desecration of the sanctuary. Thus the stones that covered the cherub himself were, in fact, "stones of fire." In them, as we have many times seen, were the reflections of the divine attributes, which must be revealed in wrath therefore against all profanation of them. So had this king of Tyre been walking as "amidst the stones of fire." However ignorant and however careless, nevertheless his was the responsibility of such a position. His would be the judgment if he abused such a position. It should be plain that much more than the temporary ministry to the temple in Solomon's time is here intended. No doubt the connection of Tyre with the temple in this case was the connection with that revelation of God of which Israel was the depositary; it should have enlightened him fully as to the One with whom he had to do, and brought him consciously into that light in which henceforth he would have seen light.

But it is not merely knowledge that makes us responsible, but the *lack* of knowledge when we should have had it; how much more, therefore, the lack of availing one's self of the opportunity for knowledge which God is everywhere giving, is in fact pressing upon men! All the beauty of creation was in the temple upon the mountain of God, dedicated to the God of creation, seen in its proper place, and thus with all the beauty which such a place would give it; for the jewel is seen in the light, and God's jewels in the light of God. Yet in these relationships of Tyre with Israel, we have the anticipation of a time to come, when, under a greater than Solomon, " the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift." And as we think of Hiram, the Tyrian, the fashioner of things in the temple (the very name of the king of Tyre of that time being his own), how suggestive it is of privileges conferred, and at the same time of responsibilities incurred!

The Lord owns also the blamelessness of her ways in this respect, which in some sense, at least, might well be taken for the time of her creation, putting her as a nation in the place in which she might have availed herself of blessed opportunities, and united herself to the people of God in a way that certainly He on His part would have owned and perpetuated. But the attraction of the world was too great, and the history of man from the beginning repeated itself here. Deceit and violence quickly followed. How we misconceive often as uprightness in man that which is only lack of opportunity; or, let us say, lack of trial sufficient to reveal a man even to himself. and certainly to others! How men can be taken thus with their own beauty, when it is but factitious, a glory with which circumstances only have surrounded one, like the halo of a

was lifted up [a]because of thy beauty; thou hast [b]corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I have cast thee to the ground, I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee. By the multitude of thine iniquities, by the unrighteousness of thy [c]traffic, thou hast profaned thy sanctuaries: and I have brought forth a fire out of the midst of thee, it hath devoured thee; and I have turned thee to ashes upon the earth in the [d]sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the peoples shall be astonished at thee: thou art become a terror, and thou shalt [e]never be any more.

a *cf.* ch. 16. 14, 15. *cf.* ch.31.10. *cf.* Prov. 16. 18. *cf.* Rom. 1. 21-23.
b *cf.* Jer 8.9.
c ch. 27. 33.
d *cf.* Rev. 18. 9. *cf.* ch. 26. 17, 18.
e ch. 26. 21. *cf.* ch. 27. 35, 36. *cf.* Rev. 18. 21.

traditional saint; and the God of truth cannot spare it, while the heart lifted up because of this external beauty is corrupted by it. All the sanctuaries of the soul, or what should be such, become profaned. It is the image of man that appears in them instead of God. Covetousness shows itself as idolatry and thus out of it comes forth the fire which shall surely and finally sweep it all away.

Many have seen in all this account a greater prince depicted than the king of Tyre, and we cannot refuse such application of prophecies which have their most obvious fulfilment near at hand; but this is only the pledge and anticipation of that final one which is always the great thing with God, while man is prone to lose sight of it in what is nearer and therefore larger to his eyes. In all this part of Ezekiel, the judgment at hand by Nebuchadnezzar has indeed a special place; but there are, nevertheless, many intimations in various places, both of final judgment and of final blessing. Here, where the glory of the world has been spread out so before our eyes, it seems fully in place that there should be seen a real prince of it, and in this way some of the things here speak with more fulness than in their first application: thus the fall, by self-occupation and the pride begotten by it—for it was in this way that he who was created an upright and glorious being became an apostate and a devil. The cherub character given him would be more difficult, spite of the common thoughts about angelic cherubs, if we were to take Ezekiel alone. But Daniel reveals the principalities of the earth as angelic, and as having a place in this way from which even their fall has not yet removed them. Thus it is, as the apostle tells us, "with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" that we are in conflict still, and the book of Revelation shows this just at the time when Satan is cast down from heaven (Rev. xii.). In Job also we are made to realize the cherub place he has. In his accusation of Job, which is all upon the ground of righteousness, as detecting what is false and unreal, he is, as it were, professedly covering the throne of God. And while in Ezekiel the human and other forms of the cherub seem to leave no place for the angelic, yet they in no wise conflict with this, the thought itself of the cherub requiring naturally, as one would say, the angel also as the highest natural creature of God to supplement it. Thus also we may realize the application of what is said of Eden here, though it be gone from the earth, and the stones of fire. What to an angel must be the riches of the earth, which man, prodigal as he is, so little cares to estimate, while he is so busy squandering them! After all, we may well conceive here the great king of Tyre, whose judgment abides a future time, when he too shall be cast out of the mount of God and come to that end which, in the patience of God, so long has tarried.

5 (20-26): Sidon: retributive judgment which acts to deliver Israel from her enemies.

5. And the *f* word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face towards *g* Sidon, and prophesy against it and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am *h* against thee, O Sidon, and I will be *i* glorified in the midst of thee; and they shall *j* know that I am Jehovah when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. And I will send pestilence into her, and blood in her streets; and the wounded shall fall in the midst of her by the *k* sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am Jehovah. And there shall be no more a pricking *l* brier to the house of Israel, nor a grieving thorn of any that are round about them, that despised them: and they shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, When I shall have *m* gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the nations, then shall they *n* dwell in their own land which I gave to my servant Jacob. They shall dwell in it in safety, and shall build houses and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell in safety when I have executed *o* judgments upon all those that despised them round about them; and they shall *p* know that I am Jehovah their God.

f ver. 1, etc.
g ch. 32. 30. *cf.* Is. 23. 2-4.
h ch. 5. 8, etc.
i *cf.* ch 39. 13.
j ver. 26, etc.
k *cf.* ch. 25. 7, 11, 17. *cf.* ch. 26. 6.
l *cf.* Num. 33. 55. *cf.* Josh. 23. 13. *cf.* Judg. 2. 3. *cf.* Is. 35. 9 with Is. 55. 13.
m *cf.* Is. 11. 12. *cf.* Lev. 26. 44, 45. *cf.* Deut. 30. 3, 4. *cf.* Ps. 106. 47. *cf.* Jer. 30. 18. *cf.* Hos. 1. 11. *cf.* Joel 3. 7.
n ch. 36. 28. *cf.* Jer. 23. 8. *cf.* Lev. 25. 18, 19. *cf.* Deut. 12. 10. *cf.* Is. 65. 21, 22. *cf.* Amos 9. 13, 14.
o *cf.* Ps. 9. 16.
p ch. 34. 30; *cf.* Ex. 29. 46.

5. We have now the judgment upon Sidon, as supplementary to the judgment upon kindred Tyre. It is of the briefest, but as the first-born of Canaan, he cannot be overlooked here. Sidon means not distinctively "the fisher," as some say, for which there is no word, but "the taker of prey." Sidon was a great mercantile power before Tyre was known, and thus Homer speaks exclusively of her. In general, Tyre represents the Canaanite character, and therefore Sidon requires briefer notice. But she has been a pricking brier and a grievous thorn in Israel's side; not very formidable, perhaps, through lack of power, but that was not her fault. It is the enmity that God judges here, as elsewhere. Israel has sinned and given occasion to what the malice of others might do and justify themselves in doing. Nevertheless, it was malice, and that against God in His people. Hence, Jehovah should be known by them in judgment simply. In Israel, spite of her terrible failure and sin, He will be known in final grace; it must be in *grace*, for she can claim nothing, as we know. Can any of us claim anything from God on any other ground? But this only makes it sure that God will cleave to this in which all the interests of man and His own glory are alike concerned. In us He is going to show "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Who shall forbid Him this? And how suited that this unrepenting grace should take up Israel also according to the angel's words to Zechariah (Zech. iii.), in which her sin and just condemnation are alike owned: "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" True, it is this; but Satan is ever and only the adversary against God as he is against man. But if it is God's will to pluck a brand out of the fire, who shall say Him nay?

Sec. 5.

We have seen, then, the judgment of the world, as represented in Tyre, the

merchantman, rich with all that man's energy can pillage from the earth and use with the lavishness of a prodigal who knows not its value—use it also as the prodigal away from his Father's house, and with no reference any more to that Father whom he has forgotten. We come now finally to look at the world in another way, in which however it closely connects with what we have had before. It is a fallen world in the one case and in the other, and the marks of the fall upon it are essentially similar. The soul away from God, having lost faith in Him, must needs have faith in itself, or there would be despair at once. Thus man's competency comes in to meet the defect of God's incompetency, and while taking freely what God has graciously bestowed upon him, he uses it to build himself up in pride and self-sufficiency. We see this unmistakably in Egypt, the lesson of which is as clear as it is fundamental.

Egypt is, as we have seen long since, the land of Mizraim—the double strip: that is, the strip on each side of the river, the overflow of which has formed and enriches it. Wherever we look at it, it is essentially the land of independence, as far as heaven is concerned. The rain seldom falls there; it is not expected. The sources of the river are necessarily in the heavens themselves, but so far off that they are no more thought of, or if speculated about, the speculations themselves are of no great consequence. The practical thing is that the river is there, always there, overflowing at a certain regular time most convenient for man's purposes, giving him little to think about, only how best to guide hither and thither the supply which is thus made his own. Indeed he values himself upon this, that he can direct this abundant water with great wisdom so as to meet with it his own needs. Thus Pharaoh can say, as we see him here doing: "My river is mine, and I have made it." Practically it is the reverse of this, it is the river that has made him. Even the name of the first father of the Egyptians, Mizraim, is given to him, as one would say, by the land to which he owes his all: which is after all but the narrow strip through a desert in constant conflict with it, blowing its sand upon it in such a way as would soon annihilate the whole strip if it were not for the constant overflow of the river. Life is thus in perpetual conflict with death, and the Egyptians, one would say, were in a position to value life and enjoy it. No doubt in a way they did—yet from the earliest times Egypt was, what the earth at large very much is, a place of death rather than of life. Egypt is emphatically the land of tombs. Its literary memorial is a book of the dead. Their great men built their sepulchres with more extravagance than their palaces, for they realized that they were to use them longer; and, almost as if in mockery of themselves, they had their bodies embalmed that they might enjoy their sepulchres!

Thus if death is the stamp upon man's fallen condition, it was not only over all the land of Egypt—it is everywhere—but was emphasized there in a most remarkable way. The very lesson that God would impress upon man, and would have him take to heart, he has taken to show *how little* his heart is impressed by it, for he remains the same vain, self-confident creature that he ever was. This, alas, is the fundamental moral condition of the fall. All blessing comes from keeping the creature-place, but there is this constant tendency to depart from it, God's mercy being abused to that very end, as we have seen. Thus, in very mercy, must judgment come to abase the pride of man and give him wisdom in the only way possible. This, then, is what we find in the section before us. Egypt is everywhere in Scripture the type of that fallen condition out of which we have been redeemed; in this condition, he who has been

SECTION 5 (Chaps. xxix.-xxxii).

Egypt: the abasement of creature-pride for ever before God.

1 (xxix. 1-16): Causes of the judgment.
1 (1-5): Pride and self-sufficiency.

1. [1] In the [q]tenth year, in the tenth [month], on the twelfth of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh, king of [r]Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt; speak and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [s]against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great monster that lieth in the midst of his rivers,*

* A word said to be of Egyptian origin, and used almost exclusively of the river Nile.

q ch. 1. 2, etc.
r cf. Is. 19. 1. *cf.* Jer. 25. 19. *cf.* Jer. 46. 2. 25. *cf.* chs. 30-32. *cf.* Joel 3. 19 *cf.* Zech. 14. 18, 19.
s ver. 10, etc. *ctr.* Rom. 8. 31.

awakened by the life-giving Spirit of God finds himself in captivity, and out of it he must be redeemed as Israel was redeemed out of Egypt.*

1. We have, first, the causes of the judgment; they are, mainly, two: First, that pride and self-sufficiency itself, of which we have already spoken. Second, that Egypt has been a breaking staff to Israel; a staff of reed, which offered much, but never fulfilled its promises, bringing only ruin to all that trusted it. The going down to Egypt for help was the constant snare of the people of God, though they had been delivered from that land, and seen God's judgment upon it in their own deliverance. Yet they could again and again turn back to it. Alas, it is an inconsistency which not one of us who knows himself can be a stranger to! Happy for those who are taught by any means at last to say, as the apostle says for Christians as such: "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and *have no confidence in the flesh.*" What blessing is implied in such a condition, but how slow we are in reaching it! God must, therefore, for Israel, Himself break this staff that they leaned upon; and although He show mercy in the end, and Egypt is not finally left to judgment, as with Edom or Babylon, yet it must be henceforth a "base," that is, a low kingdom, something that will invite no more the confidence which it has hitherto invited, and be trusted no more by those about it. The lesson is as plain as it is fundamental. It is the lesson, "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

[1] The date of the prophecy is the tenth year, and the tenth month, the number of responsibility and of judgment being thus emphasized for us. It is given on the twelfth day of the month, the number which speaks of the manifestation of divine government, as it is manifested here. On this day, says the prophet, "The word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. Speak and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great monster that lieth in the midst of his rivers, who hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself." Pharaoh is likened here to the crocodile of his rivers, the "long stretched," as the word "monster" here literally means; a creature whom one might think took shape by his river, as the king of Egypt does—an unclean creature at the best; an ungainly one, however huge he may be, and however much the scales which shut him in may give him defence against all that may be adverse. He lies there, in no really

* Tyre seems to represent the world in its intercourse and traffic; Egypt in its isolation and authority.—S. R.

who hath said, My [t]river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. And I will put [u]hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales; and I will [v]cast thee forth into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open field; thou shalt not be brought together nor gathered: I will give thee for [w]food to the beasts of the earth and to the fowls of the heavens.

2 (6-12): A breaking staff to Israel.

[2] And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am Jehovah, because they have been a [x]staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee

[t] *cf.* ch. 28. 2. *cf.* Is. 10. 13, 14. *cf.* Deut. 8. 17.
[u] *cf.* Is. 37. 29. *cf.* ch. 38. 4. *cf.* Job 41. 1, 2. *cf.* Amos 4. 2.
[v] ch. 32. 4 6. *cf.* Jer. 8 2.
[w] *cf.* ch. 39. 4-6, 17-20. *cf.* Ps. 74 14. *cf.* Rev. 19. 17, 18.
[x] *cf.* 2 Ki. 18. 21. *cf.* Is. 20 5, 6. *cf.* Is. 30 2-7. *cf.* Is. 31. 1-3.

exalted position, as is plain, and with little ability to survey things beyond the banks which on either side enclose him. Yet he can derive matter of boasting out of all this: "My river is mine own," he says, "and I have made it for myself." The ditches, the canals, the embankments and sluices are of his own manufacture truly, and this he calls making the river; just as we think so much of the little we do, and so little of all that God has done for us. What a sight for the angels that excel in strength, to see a creature pinned to the earth that bears him, as the crocodile to his river-bank, and yet boasting himself to be in the place of God, and be his own god! And it was not Pharaoh's boast alone, as we have sufficiently seen. A god to himself, he was a god also to his people, as is well known, whose fate is represented as identified with that of their king as the fish of the rivers sticking to his scales; for all that he is to be brought out of his river, and in a way that will abase him utterly: "I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales; and I will cast thee forth into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers; thou shalt fall upon the open field; thou shalt not be brought together nor gathered. I will give thee for food to the beasts of the earth and to the fowls of the heavens." No overthrow can be more complete. Thus, in another sense than that of Samson's riddle, "Out of the eater comes forth meat;" he becomes the prey of those upon whom hitherto he had preyed.

[2] We come now to the second cause of the judgment, and we see how God takes up the cause of His people, foolish and perverse as they may have been. Had they not been sufficiently warned that they must not trust in Egypt? Were they not fully accountable in doing this after all the care that God had taken to deliver them from it? This Pharaoh, then, who has invited their confidence in himself which he cannot justify, who, as thus leaned upon by Israel, has given way under them and rent all their shoulder and lamed all their loins, he must be put into the place where he belongs, and God Himself must break the staff that has broken to His people's hurt. The fertility of Egypt, proverbial as it was, must therefore be turned into deserts and desolation from one end of it to the other. Migdol was on the east border of lower Egypt, as Syene was on the border of upper Egypt, on the boundary between it and Cush, or Ethiopia. Not only would the desolation for a time be extreme, but the people would be scattered from the land, and the cities laid waste forty years.

by thy hand, thou didst give way and did rend all their shoulder; and when they leaned upon thee, thou didst break, and didst make all their loins to tremble. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will bring a [y]sword upon thee, and cut off from thee man and beast. And the land of Egypt shall be a [z]desolation and a waste, and they shall [a]know that I am Jehovah: because he saith, The [b]river is mine, and I have made it. Therefore, behold, I am [c]against thee and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt deserts of waste and desolation, [d]from Migdol to Syene, even to the border of Ethiopia. Foot of man shall not pass through it, nor shall foot of beast pass through it, nor shall it be inhabited [e]forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be a desolation forty years; and I will [f]scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

y cf. ch. 21. 3, 4, etc.
z ch. 30. 7, etc.
a vers. 16, etc.
b ver. 3.
c ch. 28. 22, etc.
d ch. 30. 6.
e cf. Num. 14. 33. *cf.* Jer. 46. 19. *cf.* Is. 23. 15, 17. *cf.* 2 Chron. 36 21.
f ch. 30. 23.

The judgment here has raised an historical question of which the critics have naturally not been slow to avail themselves. We must remember, in thinking of it, that the reckoning of Scripture is not that in respect to time with which we are familiar. That the words here do not necessitate that the desolation must be complete, after the manner spoken here, for the whole forty years, is easily to be proved by what is undeniable elsewhere. In Genesis xv. 13, God speaks to Abraham of his seed being strangers in a land that is not theirs, serving them, and to be afflicted by them 400 years. And again we have in Exodus xii. 40, 41, the time more precisely stated: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was 430 years; and it came to pass at the end of the 430 years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Thus complete accuracy is asserted. Yet, when we turn to the epistle to the Galatians, we find from the pen of one who certainly could not be ignorant or mistaken in what he asserted, that the law came just 430 years after the *promise* which God had given (Gal. iii. 17).

It is plain, therefore, that the 430 years are to be taken as *from the promise*, and that they define the time *to which* the captivity in Egypt lasted. Thus in the 15th of Genesis we must read this as meaning that the people should be captives to the Egyptians until 400 years *from that time;* the captivity is defined as to the *end* of it, instead of as we at first would naturally think, as to both ends. The forty years from the time of the prophecy here would reach to about the time of the overthrow of the Babylonian empire, the power of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, until the Persian overthrew his city and his dynasty. That it is Nebuchadnezzar's hand which God uses to inflict this upon Egypt is plain from what follows almost immediately; and while the critics have doubted whether Nebuchadnezzar himself ever was in Egypt, we have now the proof from Egyptian and from Babylonian records together, that he was there *twice;* and it is even stated that the land was scourged by him as far as to Syene. It was completely in his hand.

3 (13-16): Yet restoration.

3 Yet thus saith the Lord Jehovah: At the [g]end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the peoples whither they were scattered; and I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return to the land of Pathros, unto the land of their birth; and they shall be there a [h]base kingdom. It shall be the basest of kingdoms; neither shall it [i]lift itself up any more above the nations; and I will diminish them, so that they shall no more rule over the nations. And it shall be no more the [j]confidence of the house of Israel, bringing iniquity to remembrance when they turn after them: and they shall [k]know that I am the Lord Jehovah.

2 (17-21): Nebuchadrezzar's wages for service elsewhere.

2. And it came to pass in the [l]seven and twentieth year, in the first [month], on the first of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to do hard service against [m]Tyre; every head was made bald and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no [n]wages from Tyre, nor his army, for the service he had served against it. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah:

[g] *cf.* Is. 19. 22-25. *cf.* Jer. 46. 26.

[h] *cf.* ch. 17. 6, 14. ch 30. 13. *cf.* Zech. 10. 11.

[i] *cf.* Dan. 4. 37. *cf.* Dan. 11. 42, 43. *cf.* Nah. 3. 8-10.

[j] vers. 6, 7. Is. 30. 2, 3. Is. 36. 4, 6. *cf.* Jer. 2. 18, 19.

[k] ver 21, etc.

[l] *cf.* ch. 30. 20, etc.

[m] ch. 26. 7-12. *cf.* Jer. 27. 6. *cf.* Is. 7. 20.

[n] *cf.* Is. 43. 3.

3 At the end of the forty years, God announces a certain measure of restoration: "At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the place whither they were scattered; and I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return to the land of Pathros, unto the land of their birth, and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of kingdoms, neither shall it lift itself up any more above the nations; and I will diminish them so that they shall no more rule over the nations, and shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel." This has been, as is well known, Egypt's condition since. Under the Ptolemies, whether there might seem to be something more than this, it was the foreigner who had possession of the country, and Egypt has ever since been in the hand of foreigners; the more the power that reigned over them lifted itself up, the more was the burden upon the subject people.

2. We have now Nebuchadnezzar distinctly named as the instrument of this judgment, and this at a notable time. The prophecy, unlike the other prophecies with which this is connected, is stated to have been given in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, the first day of the month. At that time, after thirteen years' siege at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, Tyre had just fallen; and the prophecy with regard to it which Ezekiel had thus made long before, was fully proved; God was manifested as He whose judgment it was, and in whose hand, therefore, the conqueror himself was. The "twenty-seventh year" may as a number refer to this. It is the number of divine manifestation cubed. The reality of God's government was made fully plain, and here we have one of the various ways in which God would speak to Nebuchadnezzar himself, as is so manifest in the book of Daniel. As the head of the new Gentile power that God had raised up, Nebuchadnezzar as king of kings owed all to the Hand that raised him, and God would have him learn the lesson of this.

Thus, with the seal upon God's word in what he had already accomplished,

Behold, I will [o]give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall carry away her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor wherewith he served against it, because they wrought [p]for me, saith the Lord Jehovah. In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to [q]bud forth, and I will give thee the [r]opening of the mouth in the midst of them: and they shall [s]know that I am Jehovah.

3 (xxx. 1-19): The full judgment upon the land.

3. And the [t]word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Howl ye, alas for the day! For the day is at hand, yea, the [u]day of Jehovah is at hand, a day of clouds; it shall be the time of the nations. And the [v]sword shall come upon Egypt, and there shall be anguish in

o ch. 30. 10-12. cf. Jer. 43. 10-13.
p cf. Is. 10. 6, 7. cf. Is.45.1-3. cf. Jer.25.9. cf. 2 Ki. 10. 30.
q ch. 28. 25, 26. cf. Ps. 132. 17. cf. Is. 27. 6.
r ch. 3. 26. ch. 24. 27.
s vers. 6, 9, 16.
t ch. 29. 1, etc.
u Joel 2. 1, 2, etc. Zeph. 1. 7, 14.
v ch. 29. 8.

Nebuchadnezzar was to carry with him into Egypt an assurance which every step towards his full exaltation would thus confirm. Egypt was to be the spoil given him for his lack of wages in his service against Tyre. It was God's work that he had been doing, whether he regarded it as such or no, and yet in the thirteen years of the siege in which "every head was made bald, and every shoulder peeled," he found in the end, very naturally indeed, nothing but a ruin left. Thus the land of Egypt would be given him as his recompense: "He shall carry away her multitude, and take her spoil and take her prey, and it shall be wages for his army."

The prophecy ends here, as far as Nebuchadnezzar is concerned, and the voice to him in it is unmistakable. In that day God would cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and He would give Ezekiel the opening of his mouth in the midst of them. The budding of the horn speaks but of partial and more or less slow revival for the people of God, which shows itself, in its beginning, in what the end of the book of Kings supplies as to the altered treatment of Jehoiachin, from whose captivity, let us remember, these prophecies are all dated, and who was brought out of his prison by Nebuchadnezzar's successor and given a place above all the subject kings that surrounded him. Later, we have also Daniel's exaltation, after a period seemingly of forgetfulness under Belshazzar and Darius, which was soon followed by the return of the people to the land under Cyrus. Thus the horn of Israel was indeed budding. In the prophets of that period, as Haggai and Zechariah, we have intimations of a further and more wondrous budding of the horn in the announcement of Messiah's coming. Israel's sins still hindered, as we know, and Messiah Himself came only to be rejected; but that belongs not to God's side, if we may so speak, but to the people's. The final visions of Ezekiel (chs. 40-48) had been uttered just before the prophecy which we are now looking at, the fulfilment of which, however, would now cause them to speak in such a way as to be heard, though, as we know, only by a remnant.

3. We have now still another prophecy, which is, however, but the detailed announcement of that judgment upon the land already declared. The day of Jehovah is at hand, a day of sorrow and distress: "A day of clouds shall it be, the time of the nations;" that is, the full time is at hand in which the judg-

Ethiopia when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be overthrown. [w]Ethiopia and Phut and Lud and all the mingled people, and Chub and the children of the land that is in league shall fall with them by the sword. Thus saith Jehovah, They also that [x]uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her strength shall come down: from Migdol to Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord Jehovah. And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolated, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted. And they shall [y]know that I am Jehovah, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and all her helpers shall be broken. In that day shall [z]messengers go forth from me in ships to make careless Ethiopia afraid; and there shall be anguish upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh!

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the [a]hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain. And I will [b]make the rivers dry, and will sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land desolate and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I, Jehovah, have spoken it.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also [c]destroy the idols, and I will cause the images to cease out of Noph. There shall be no more a prince out of the land of Egypt; and I will put fear in the land of Egypt. And I will [d]make Pathros desolate, and will set a fire in Zoan, and will execute judgment upon No. And I will pour my [e]wrath upon Sin, the stronghold of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No. And I will set a [f]fire in Egypt: Sin shall be in great anguish, and No

w Is. 20. 4. Jer. 46. 9. Nah. 3. 9. *cf.* ch. 27. 10.
x *cf.* Is. 20. 3–6. *cf.* Is. 31. 3.
y ch. 30. 26, etc.
z *cf.* Is. 18. 1, 2. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 12. *cf.* ch. 39. 6.
a *cf.* ch. 29. 18, etc.
b *cf.* Is. 19. 5–10. *cf.* Jer. 50. 38. *cf.* Nah. 1. 4.
c *cf.* Ex. 12. 12. *cf.* Is. 2. 18. *cf.* Zech. 13. 2.
d *cf.* ch. 29. 14. *cf.* Ps. 78. 12, 43. *cf.* Is. 19. 11.
e *cf.* Ps. 11. 6. *cf.* Nah. 1. 6.
f *cf.* ch. 28. 18.

ment will be accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar's hand which, as we have already seen, prepares the way for the full establishment of the universal Gentile empire. Egypt seems to have been the last of these nations to experience this; but with and in Egypt it comes upon Ethiopia, Phut and Lud, and all the mingled people, "the children of the land of the covenant"—apparently those Israelitish colonists of whom Jeremiah speaks, and whose judgment he also emphatically announces. Thus Egypt is desolate in the midst of the countries that have been made desolate, and her cities in the midst of the cities that have been wasted. Egypt's end is the full tale told, and Nebuchadnezzar is again clearly announced as the one by whose hand it is to be executed. The points that are marked out here are naturally those which either set before us the idolatry, in Egypt so monstrous, and which God could never forget, or on the other hand, the symbols of her power and might, and her capitals upper and lower (No or Thebes, and Noph or Memphis); Zoan also, which God had

shall be rent asunder, and Noph [shall have] [g]enemies daily. The [g]young men of Aven and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword; and these shall go into captivity. And at [h]Tehaphnehes the day shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt, and the [i]pride of her power shall cease in her. As for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into [j]captivity. Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt, and they shall [k]know that I am Jehovah.

4 (xxx. 20–26): Breach and scattering.

4. And it came to pass in the [l]eleventh year, in the first [month], on the seventh of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have [m]broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and behold, it shall not be [n]bound up to apply remedies, to put a bandage to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [o]against Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong one and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand. And I will [p]scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and will put my sword in his hand; and I will break the arms of Pharaoh, so that he shall groan before him with the groaning of a deadly wounded man. And I will [q]strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have put [r]my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall have stretched it out upon the land of Egypt. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries: and they shall [s]know that I am Jehovah.

g *cf.* Is.40.30.
h Jer. 2. 16.
i Dan. 4. 37.
j ver. 17. ch. 29. 12.
k vers. 25,26.
l ch. 29. 17. ch. 32. 1,etc.
m ver. 24. *cf.* Ps.10 15. *cf.*Jer 48.25.
n *cf.* Jer. 30. 13. *ctr.* Ps.51.8.
o ch.29.3,etc.
p ver. 26. ch 29.12,13. *cf* Ps.68.30.
q *cf.*Is.45.1,5. *cf.* Jer. 27. 6 8. *cf.* Is.10.5,6, 15. *cf.* Deut. 32. 41, 42.
r *cf.* Is. 10. 5 *cf.*Jer.51.20.
s ver. 8, etc.

plagued of old in Moses' time, having its place among these: the strongholds are gone and the land is open to all assailants. The picture speaks for itself, hardly needing a word of explanation. The purpose is here, as everywhere—whether men will listen or whether they will forbear—that they may know that He is Jehovah.

4. We have now another distinct, short prophecy, with regard to the incurableness of the breach which God has already made upon Egypt, evidently when they were defeated at the battle of Carchemish—a blow from which they never recovered. The prophecy is to forbid all revival of hope on account of the activity and energy which Egypt for the time was again showing. The effort to relieve the siege of Jerusalem is of course specially in view, and God announces that no bandage should be applied to bind up the arm that has been broken, so that it should be able to hold the sword again. On the contrary, He would break that and the other arm also, and cause the sword to fall out of Pharaoh's hand. The Egyptians should be scattered among the nations and dispersed through the countries; the king of Babylon is once more named as the instrument of this. It is striking how these prophecies follow one another,

5 (xxxi.): The divine ways with the Assyrian a lesson for Egypt.
[1] (1 9): His might.

5. [1] And it came to pass in the [t]eleventh year, in the third [month], on the first of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to his multitude: Whom art thou [u]like in thy greatness? Behold, [v]Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with fair branches and with a shadowing thicket and of a high stature; and his top was amid the thick boughs. The [w]waters made him great, the deep exalted him; its streams ran round about his plantation, and it sent out its rivulets to [z]all the trees of the field. Therefore his stature was [y]exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long, because of many waters when he sent them forth. All the [z]fowl of the heavens made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all the great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches; for his root was by many waters. The [a]cedars in the garden of God could not hide him;

t ch. 30. 20, etc. ch. 32. 1, 17.
u ver. 18. Is. 14. 13,14.
v cf. Is.10. 33, 34. *cf.* Nah. 3. 8-10. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 13-15. *cf.* ch. 17. 3, 4, 22.
w ch. 17. 5, 8. *cf.* Jer.51.36. *cf.* Prov. 14. 28.
x cf. Dan. 4. 12. *cf.* ch.17.24.
y Is. 10.8-14. Is. 36.18,19.
z ch. 17. 23. *cf.* Mt.13.32. *cfr.*Is.60.8,9.
a ch. 28. 13. *cf.* Ps 80.10. *cf.* Gen. 3.8.

which shows the urgency, on God's part, that His people should encourage themselves in no false hope. We can see how every blow upon such hopes was intended to fasten their hope upon God Himself; but how little will man listen to anything short of experience itself, hard teacher though it is owned to be! How we have again and again to hear the word "Cease ye from man," affirmed and emphasized by the event itself. How slow are we to come to that to which we *must* come finally, and which will have such abundant recompense for us!

5. We have now God's governmental ways with the Assyrian as another lesson for Egypt. There was a strong link of connection between the lands themselves. Assyria, like Egypt, was as an oasis in the desert track which stretches across nearly the whole breadth of Africa and Asia, from the Atlantic to the China Sea; an oasis which for Assyria was made by its two rivers, to which it owed its all, as Egypt did to the Nile. Thus essentially dependent, as it might be seen to be, yet it was self-exaltation and not the sense of dependence that grew out of it. Thus in the end abasement had to follow, for God's law is: He that exalteth himself shall be abased.

[1] The prophecy in this case is in the eleventh year, as was the last, and scarcely two months after it, On the first day of the third month, the word of Jehovah comes to Ezekiel, saying, "Son of man, say unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to his multitude: Whom art thou like in thy greatness?" How gladly would we make ourselves the one exception, so that that which applies to others should not apply to us! God therefore points them to Assyria, a power as strong as Egypt itself. The rivers that had made him great were the rivers of that old Eden which had passed away, but which might seem to have revived again in him and such as he—though just such as he among the neighboring powers there was not. In Tyre, one might have seen again, as it were, the precious stones of Eden. In Assyria and the neighboring powers, the trees of the Garden of God might seem to have reproduced themselves in another manner, but all alike dwelt under the shadow of the one preeminent

the cypresses were not like his boughs, and the plane-trees were not as his branches; no tree in the garden of God was like him in his beauty. I had made him fair by the multitude of his branches; so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, [b]envied him.

2 (10-18): His humiliation.

[2] Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [c]Because thou hast lifted thyself up in stature . . . He hath even set his top amid the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height. I have [d]given him into the hand of the mighty one of the nations; he shall surely deal with him; I have driven him out for his [e]wickedness. And [f]strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken in all the water-courses of the land; and all the peoples of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have [g]left him. On his [h]ruins all the fowl of heaven dwell, and all the beasts of the field are upon his branches: to the end that [i]none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves in their stature, neither set their top among the thick boughs, and that none of them that drink water stand up in his height by himself: for they are all delivered unto death in the lower parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go [j]down to the pit.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day when he went down to Sheol I caused a [k]mourning; I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed; and I caused Lebanon to be black for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to [l]shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to Sheol with

b *cf.* Judg. 9. 8-20. *cf.* Zech. 11. 2. *cf.* Gen. 26. 14.
c *cf.* Mt. 23. 12. *cf.* ch. 28. 6, 7. *cf.* Dan. 5. 20. *ctr.* 2 Chron. 34. 27.
d *cf.* ch. 11. 9. *cf.* Judg. 13. 1.
e *cf.* Nah. 3. 15-19. *cf.* Deut. 18. 12.
f ch. 30. 11. *cf.* Hab. 1. 5-11. ch. 32. 4, 5.
g *cf.* Dan. 4. 13, 14. *cf.* Rev. 17. 16.
h ch. 29. 5. Jer. 7. 33. Is. 18. 6. *cf.* Rev. 19. 17, 18.
i *cf.* Deut. 13. 11. *cf.* Dan. 4. 32, 37. *cf.* Ps. 83. 17, 18.
j ch. 32. 18-32. Ps. 63. 9, 10.
k *cf.* Nah. 2. 10. *cf.* Rev. 18. 9-11, 18, 19. *cf.* ch. 27. 29-32.
l *cf.* ch. 26. 15. *cf.* Is. 14. 8.

power which was the envy of them all. Like a cedar in Lebanon was he, with fair branches and a shadowing thicket, and of high stature. All the fowls of the heavens made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young; so under his shadow dwelt all the great nations. No tree in this Garden of God was like him in his beauty. But, thus made great by the fostering care of God, it was only to repeat the old story; for what gift of God is there that man will not abuse? And what hope is there, one would say, for the being with whom God's mercies are turned to evil instead of good? It is a terrible lesson, but so constantly to be learned, that the wonder of it is sadly lessened by familiarity.

[2] The contrast of his humiliation was now correspondingly great. He too had been given into the hand of Babylon, one who would make thorough work with him; for when God has work to be done, He will see that it *is* done. As a consequence, instead of seeking his protection, the birds and the beasts would dwell among his ruins. All the peoples of the earth had gone down from his shadow and had left him; and this was no inexplicable calamity, but a warning which the sure government of God preaches everywhere against pride, and which,

them that go down into the pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the lower parts of the earth. They also went down unto Sheol with him unto them that are slain by the sword; yea, they that were his [m]arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the nations. To whom art thou thus [n]like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden into the lower parts of the earth; thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with them that are slain by the sword. This is [o]Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah.

6 (xxxii. 1-16): God's victory over the victor.

6. And it came to pass in the [p]twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a [q]lamentation for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou wast like a young [r]lion of the nations, and thou wast as a monster in the seas; and thou brakest forth in thy rivers, and [s]troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their streams.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also spread my [t]net over thee with an assemblage of many peoples; and they shall bring thee up in my net. And I will

m ch. 32. 20-30. ch. 30. 6, 8. *cf.* Lam. 4. 20. *cf.* Dan. 4. 11, 12.
n ver. 2. ch. 32. 19. *cf.* Mt. 11. 20-24.
o *cf.* Ps. 52. 7.
p ch. 31. 1. etc. ver. 17.
q vers. 16, 18. ch. 27. 2, etc.
r *cf.* ch. 19. 2-6. *cf.* ch. 38. 13.
s *cf.* ch. 34. 18.
t ch. 12. 13. ch. 17. 20. *cf.* Hos. 7. 12.

if it were but for the moment, was felt by all around. In fact, were they not all following in the same path which could only emphasize the claim of Sheol upon them?—the claim of the unseen world which gathers men on every side. For the wheel surely turns, as Ezekiel has over and over again assured us, and he that is lifted up is exalted but for the moment, then must come down to the lower parts of the earth. True it is that, if we follow this out, we shall find that in God's thought there is a resurrection also, and that whatever is permanent in blessing lies in this for us. But man's view in general does not reach thus far, and where the lesson is not accepted, the blessing itself is not reached. God therefore challenges Pharaoh here. Sheol had its rights over him also, rights which in God's judgment were already conceded, but he must "lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with those slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah."

6. We now come to the twelfth year and the twelfth month, a period which speaks of the full manifestation of God's governmental ways. But with this, in which there should be only blessing, there comes instead a voice of lamentation, a reminder for us of those tears actually wept on earth by One who was the manifestation of God Himself in flesh, over those that had despised His gracious invitations, and would not be gathered under the wings that would so safely have covered them. The creatures that God has made must ever be objects of interest to Him—such interest as we little realize who confound so much the clouds and darkness that are about Him with the One who is distinct from the cloud and from the darkness, in whom is no darkness at all, and who has now made Himself known to us for that which indeed He ever was. Nevertheless, man may make void all this as far as he is concerned, and with his

leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the [u]fowl of the heavens to settle upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee. And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height. And I will water with thy [v]blood the land wherein thou swimmest, even to the mountains; and the watercourses* shall be full of thee. And when I shall extinguish thee, I will cover the [w]heavens, and make the stars thereof black; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of the heavens will I make black over thee, and set darkness upon thy [z]land, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will vex the heart of [y]many peoples when I shall bring [the news of] thy destruction among the nations, to the countries that thou hast not known. And I will make many peoples amazed at thee, and their [z]kings shall be horribly afraid at thee, when I brandish my sword before them; and they shall [a]tremble at every moment, each one for his own life in the day of thy fall.

For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: The sword of the [b]king of Babylon shall come upon thee. By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall: the terrible of the nations are they all; and they shall spoil the [c]pride of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed. I will destroy also all the [d]beasts thereof from beside many waters; and the foot of man shall trouble them no more, nor shall the hoofs of beasts trouble them. Then will I make their waters to settle, and cause their [e]rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord Jehovah. When I shall make the land of Egypt a desolation, and the country shall be left destitute of all its fulness, when I have smitten all them that dwell therein, then shall they [f]know that I am Jehovah. This is

*Or, "Plains."

[u] ch. 31. 13. Is. 18. 6. Jer. 25. 33. Joel 3. 19.
[v] Is. 34. 3, 7. cf. Rev. 16. 6.
[w] cf. Is. 13. 10. cf. Jer. 13 16. cf. Amos 8. 9.
[x] cf. Ex. 10. 21-23. cf. Is. 50. 3. cf. Rev. 6. 12.
[y] ver. 16, etc. cf. Rev. 11. 18. cf. Jer. 25. 15-25.
[z] ch 27. 35. cf. Deut. 29. 24. cf. 1 Ki. 9. 8.
[a] ch 30. 9. cf. Ex. 15. 14 16. cf. Zech. 11. 2.
[b] ch. 26. 7. ch. 30. 4, 22-25. Jer. 46. 13, 24-26.
[c] Is. 25. 2, 3. ch. 29. 19. cf. Is. 16. 6.
[d] ch. 30. 12. cf. 1 Sam. 15. 3.
[e] cf. Is. 8. 7, 8.
[f] cf. Ex. 7. 5. ch. 6. 7, etc.

back upon God he sees Him but as reflected in the depths of his own heart, in imaginations darkened by a guilty conscience.

Pharaoh is seen in this prophecy in a double character. He is not simply now the crocodile lying in the waters; he has broken forth as a young lion of the nations, as for some time past Egypt had been showing unwonted activity in this way, and Pharaoh sought to imitate the action of his predecessors of old, and to make himself an imperial power after the fashion of Assyria, and now of Babylon. But in this, as we know, he was doomed not to succeed. Like the restless monster which represents him, he could only trouble his own waters with his feet, and foul his streams. God, in fact, was spreading His net over him, and the human instruments were but means in His hands by which He would bring him up out of his streams and cast him upon the open field, and fill the birds of heaven and the beasts of the earth with his great bulk; his flesh would lay upon the mountains and fill the valleys; his blood would water the land, and his dead bodies would fill the rivers wherein he had been swimming.

the lamentation wherewith they shall lament: the [g]daughters of the nations shall lament therewith; for Egypt and for all her multitudes shall they lament therewith, saith the Lord Jehovah.

7 (xxxii. 17-32): At rest in the grave with all the uncircumcised.

7. And it came to pass in the [h]twelfth year, on the fifteenth of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, [i]wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her and the daughters of the famous nations, into the lower parts of the earth, with them that go down into the [j]pit. Whom dost thou surpass in [k]beauty? Go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised. They shall fall in the [l]midst of them that are slain by the sword. The sword hath been given: Draw her away, and all her multitudes. The [m]strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of Sheol with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie still, the uncircumcised slain by the sword.

There is [n]Asshur and all his assemblage, his graves round about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword; whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and his assemblage is round about his grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who caused [o]terror in the land of the living.

There is [p]Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, that are gone down uncircumcised into the lower parts of the earth, who caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their [q]shame with them that go down to the pit. They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude; her

g ver. 2. cf. 2 Chron. 35. 25.
h ver. 1, etc.
i cf. ch. 21. 6, 7. cf. Is. 16. 7, 8, 9. cf. Mic. 1. 8.
j ver. 30, etc.
k cf. ch 27. 3, 4. cf. ch. 28. 12-17.
l vers. 22-26. cf. 2 Sam. 1. 17-27.
m ver. 27. cf. Is. 1. 31. cf. Is. 14. 9, 10.
n vers. 24, 26, 29, 30. cf. Is. 30. 33. cf. Is. 37. 36-38.
o ch. 26. 20, 21. cf. Is 14. 15, 16.
p Gen. 10. 22. 1 Chron. 1. 17. Jer. 25. 25. Jer. 49. 34-39.
q cf. ch. 16. 52, 54. cf. Jer. 3. 24, 25. cf. Dan. 12. 2.

All the bright lights of heaven would be made black over him, and darkness be upon the land through the darkening of sun and moon. This is the constant figure for the destruction of the powers which God has ordained for the preservation of order upon the earth. The darkness in which one could hardly find one's way was the fitting representation of ensuing anarchy, and consternation would come upon all beholders; his fall would make all the nations around to tremble for their own lives.

Again it is announced that the sword of the king of Babylon is to do this, by reason of which the land of Egypt should be but a desolation, stripped of its plenteous fulness, its inhabitants smitten that they might know—if even yet they would know—that it was Jehovah's hand. The prophecy closes as it began, with a lamentation.

7. One final prophecy now, a dirge over Egypt as gone down to the pit. We have still the twelfth year; and, as we may suppose, the twelfth month, and the fifteenth of the month, numbers in which the full government of God is seen displayed in judgment, for, alas, there is a monotony of judgment here. Nothing else can there be, for man's wickedness permits nothing else! Sheol and the grave are now seen as receiving their claim, and the nations that have already passed into the shadow are those with whom Pharaoh and Egypt are

graves are round about her, all of them uncircumcised, slain with the sword; though terror was caused by them in the land of the living, and they have borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of them that are slain.

There is [r] Meshech, Tubal and all her multitude; her graves are round about her: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused terror by them in the land of the living. And they lie* not with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, who are gone down to Sheol with their weapons of war, and whose swords are laid under their heads, and their iniquities are upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. Thou also shalt be broken in the midst of the [s] uncircumcised, and shalt lie with them that are slain with the sword.

There is [t] Edom, her kings, and all her princes, who in their might are laid with them that are slain with the sword: they lie with the uncircumcised and with them that go down to the pit.

There are the princes of the [u] north, all of them, and all the [v] Sidonians, that are gone down with the slain; they are put to shame in the terror which they caused by their might; and they lie uncircumcised with them that are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit.

r ch. 27. 13. ch. 38. 2, 3. ch. 39. 1. Gen. 10. 2.

s *cf.* 1 Sam. 31. 4.

t ch. 25. 12. Amos 1. 11, 12. Obad. 1, 2. *cf.* Is.63.1-6.

u *cf.* ch. 38. 6, 15. *cf.* Jer.1.14. *cf.* Jer. 4. 6. *cf.* Ps.48.2,4.

v ch. 28. 21-23. Jer. 25. 22. *cf.* Mt.11.21.

* Or, "Should they not lie?"

now to be joined. Among these nations Tyre is not seen as yet; but Assyria, Elam, Meshech and Tubal, Edom, the Sidonians, are all seen as involved in one hopeless ruin. It is a judgment, as we see, not of individuals, but of nations—the judgment of the whole world, so far as it had yet come, as we may say, into the light of revelation—the circumcised with the uncircumcised; for Egypt was externally a circumcised people, but for whom it meant nothing; and now all together made equal in that which merges all distinctions, the common nervelessness and shadow of death. This monotonous dirge, the same for all of them, is part of the lesson meant by it—meant to impress us with the common blank and desolation in which so many energies, so many varieties of human character and activity, all come into one undistinguishable ruin. This is the lesson of death from which none is exempt, which God pressed upon man in that law which was the ministration of it, the common death and condemnation which man must accept in order to find blessing. It is therefore the natural end of all this part of the prophecy.

Thank God, we are going to emerge now into brighter things! But God's lessons must be learned, and in their own order. There is no escape from this, and we have to have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we may not trust in ourselves but in Him who raiseth the dead. Resurrection is all of God. Here it is plain that man has no ability whatever; he is out of account, and thus God has freedom to manifest Himself as He desires to do; then the grave itself is no hindrance to Him, but rather the means of brighter display of His divine glory. Thus among the names here, Egypt herself is to have her resur-

"Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord Jehovah. For I have caused his terror in the land of the living; and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised, with them that are slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah. *w* ch. 31. 16 *cf.* ch. 14. 22.

rection and blessing in the coming day, and Assyria also, as Isaiah witnesses (chap. xix. 23–25): "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria; and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

Division 3 (chaps. 33–48).

There is a question made of where the division of the chapters actually comes here. The references to chapters iii. and xviii. in the 33rd are manifest, and this is urged to show that it is a close and not a beginning, that it connects with what is past rather than with what is yet to come. Again, the whole chapter still speaks of judgment, as the former ones have done, not of deliverance. On the other hand, the significance of the re-opening of the prophet's mouth is in this way lost, for in the 34th the judgment is but an introduction to the grace. It could not be rightly thought that this re-opening of the mouth was only more emphatically to repeat what had been already uttered, and that then again there was to be a close. Besides which, righteousness being the eternal character of God's throne must be maintained in grace as in judgment, as we all know it has been; and this must be first made clear, that grace may have free way.

Thus it is the announcement of the fall of the city, of the full execution of judgment foretold, that opens the mouth to predict the blessing. In the next chapter the false shepherds are removed that the true Shepherd may take their place, and it is Jehovah Himself who is manifested as this, the representative of whom is found in the true David raised up unto them. This is, of course, in Messiah, the Successor to David's throne, and of whom David was but the type. The Shepherd being found, and the flock in His hand, the enemy is then answered; then the land is comforted by the rooting out of those who would possess themselves of it, and the restoration of a people reunited in heart to God; after which in the 37th chapter the nation as such is brought up from the dead, and Ephraim and Judah, long parted and at strife with one another, are made one in the land. There is yet one last enemy to be destroyed (chaps. xxxviii., xxxix.), and then the land is finally cleansed and the full blessing comes in the restoration of the dwelling-place of God among them. This is set before us in full detail, and the city is then and henceforward known by the blessed reality as His abode with them. It is *Jehovah Shammah*, "The Lord is there."

Subdivision 1

The previous chapters have shown us, then, that as far as man is concerned, all is gone. There is no hope for man that can come from himself. *God* must act if there is to be blessing, sovereignly and alone, and this is what the terms

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. xxxiii.-xlviii.)

Resurrection and Restoration.

SUBDIVISION 1 (Chaps. xxxiii.-xxxvii.)

Jehovah acting from and for Himself.

SECTION 1 (Chaps. xxxiii., xxxiv.)

The opening of the prophet's mouth.

1 (xxxiii.): The basis of righteousness.

1 (1-20): The way of Jehovah equal.

1. [1] AND the [z] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of [y] thy people, and say unto them, When I [z] bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them, and set him for their [a] watchman: if he [b] see the sword coming upon the land, and blow the [c] trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever [d] heareth the sound of the trumpet, and [e] taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his [f] blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him; whereas, if he had [g] taken warning, he would have delivered his soul. But if the watchman see the sword coming, and blow [h] not the trumpet, and the people be not warned, if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is [i] taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I [j] require of the watchman's hand.

x ch 30.1,etc. *y* ch. 3. 5, 11, 27. *cf.* Mt.10.5,6. *z cf.* ch 6. 3. *cf.* ch. 11. 8. *cf.* Lev. 26. 25. *cf.* Jer.12.12. *a* ver. 7. *cf.* 2 Sam. 18. 24-27. *cf.* Is.21.6-9. *cf.*Is.56.9,10. *cf.* Jer 51.12. *cf.* Hos.9.8. *cf.* Heb. 13. 17. *b cf.* Acts 20. 29, 30. *cf.*Lk.19.41-44. *cf.* Mic.1.9, etc. *c cf.*vers.8,9. *cf.* Neh. 4. 18, 20. *cf.* Is. 58. 1. *cf.* Jer. 4. 5. *cf.* Jer. 6. 1. *cf.* Hos 8.1. *cf.* Amos 3. 6, 7. *d cf.*Mt.13.14. *cf.* ch. 12. 2. *e cf.* 2 Chron. 25. 16. *cf.* Prov. 29. 1. *cf.* Zech.1.4. *f* ch. 18. 13. Lev.20.9,1. *cf.*Acts 18 6. *cf.* Mt 27 25. *g cf.* Ps.95 7,1 *cf.* Ex. 9. 19-21; *cf.* 2 Ki. 6; 10. *cf.* Acts 2. 37-41; *cf.* Heb.11.7. *h cf.* Is. 56. 10, 11; *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 8; *cf.r.* Acts 20. 27. *i cf.* ch. 18. 20, 24; *cf.* Jno. 8. 24; ch. 3. 18-20. *j* ch. 34. 10; *cf.* Heb. 13. 17; *cf.* Gen. 9. 5; *cf.* Gen. 42. 22; *cf.* 2 Sam. 4. 11.

of the new covenant show. There is no further expectation from man, and no condition made with him. The restoration of the people must be a resurrection from the dead; for this, God alone is competent. But all His glory thus shines out, and there is fulness of blessing found—the dirge passes into a song.

Sec. 1.

The prophet's mouth then is re-opened, because there is grace to be announced. Yet the affirmation of God's righteous ways unchanged is the fitting introduction to this. The fall of the city shows the people now fully under judgment. Their false confidences are exposed. The law has spoken, and the people, by its verdict are *Lo-ammi*, without the blood of atonement for their sins, without the place in which alone it could be sprinkled before God, God Himself entirely withdrawn. Moreover, there are no true shepherds among the people only such as are not only inadequate, but false. God must raise up the only Shepherd who can truly represent Him in His care for the feeble and scattered remnant who shall still remain an election, wholly of grace, and who are cast entirely upon Him—themselves also undone, apart from absolute grace. The true Shepherd is found in David ("the beloved"), the real fulfiller of that name and of the unrepenting promises of God to which "the sure mercies of David" are attached.

1. [1] The prophecy here does not begin with the date, as we might expect,

So [k]thou, son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; and thou shalt [l]hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O [m]wicked man, thou shalt surely die, and thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his [n]blood will I require of thy hand. But if thou [o]warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, and he turn not from his way, he shall [p]die in his iniquity; but thou hast [q]delivered thy soul.

And thou, son of man, say unto the house of Israel, Thus ye speak, saying, [r]Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away in them, [s]how then should we live? Say unto them, [t]As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have [u]no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: [v]turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? And thou, son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The [w]righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; and as for the [x]wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall he that is righteous be able to live thereby in the day that he sinneth. When I say to the [y]righteous that he shall surely live, if he [z]trust to his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; but in his iniquity that he hath committed, therein shall he die.

k ch. 3. 17. Is. 62. 6. *cf.* Hab. 2. 1.
l ch. 2. 7, 8. *cf.* Phil 3. 18.
m ver. 14. ch. 18. 4, 10-13, 18, 20. *cf.* Gen 2. 17. Is. 3. 11.
n cf. Acts 20. 26. *cf* Mt. 27. 24, 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9 16.
o ch. 3. 19, 21. *cf.* Acts 13. 40, 41. *cf.* Acts 18. 5, 6. *cf.* Acts 28. 23 28.
p Prov. 15 10. Jno. 8. 24. Acts 13. 41.
q cf. 1 Thess. 2. 3-6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 12. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 15-17. *cf.* Acts 7. 54-60.
r ch. 24. 23. *cf.* Ps. 44. 22, 25. Lev. 26. 39.
s cf. ch. 37. 11. *cf.* Jno. 11. 39, 40.
t cf. ch. 5. 11. *cf.* Num. 14. 21, 28, etc. *cf.* Is. 49. 18
u ch. 18 23, 32. Lam. 3. 33. *cf.* Lk. 15. 7, 10, 23, etc.

cf. Mic. 7. 18. *v* ch. 14. 6; ch. 18. 30; Is. 55. 7; Jer. 3. 22; Hos. 14 1. *w* ch. 3. 20, 21; ch. 18. 24-26; *cf.* Jas. 2. 10. *x* ch. 18. 21, 27 32; *cf.* Is 1. 18. *y cf.* Lk. 10. 28; *cf.* Deut. 8. 1, etc. *z* ch. 3. 20; *cf.* Phil. 3. 4-7; *cf.* Lk. 18. 9; *cf.* ch. 16. 15.

that being found, however, in verse 17. God first prepares the message which the re-opened lips of the prophet are to utter. The message given is a repetition almost wholly of chaps. iii. and xiii., a repetition which, for the purpose, is more effective than a wholly new statement. It is emphasized, however, in the first place that while men might naturally, and ordinarily would appoint themselves a watchman, the prophet is not appointed of the people, but of God in their behalf. Were there no word from Him, the accountability of the people would still remain, but God had provided a watchman for those too heedless and indifferent to care for their own interests, even the most weighty. How this, nevertheless, would increase the culpability of those who still refused the Voice that spoke to them! How often had He spoken of the sword which He was bringing upon the land! Yet they had taken no heed. Instead of looking for every sign of approaching judgment, they hardened their hearts against all that was given them in this way—nay, pressed upon them by one event after another, and by one messenger after another. What then could there be at last but that which had now come?—the awful signs no more to be refused by their desolate city, and the triumph of the heathen enemy over those who, as the people of God, would have been sheltered from every possibility of successful assault.

And when I say unto the [a]wicked, Thou shalt surely die, if he turn from his sin, and do judgment and justice; if the wicked [b]restore the pledge, give again that which he had taken by robbery, walk in the statutes of life, committing no iniquity; he shall surely [c]live, he shall not die. None of his [d]sins that he hath committed shall be remembered against him: he hath done judgment and justice; he shall surely live. Yet the children of thy people [e]say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, [f]their way is not equal.

[g]When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall die therein. And [h]when the wicked turneth from his wickedness, and doeth judgment and justice, he shall live thereby. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, I will judge you every one [i]after his ways.

2 (21-33): Confirmation of the judgment foretold.

[2]And it came to pass in the [j]twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth [month], on the fifth of the month, that one who had [k]escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten! Now the [l]hand of Jehovah had been upon me in the evening, [m]before he that had escaped came, and he had opened my mouth before he came to me in the morning; and my [n]mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.

a ver. 8. ch. 3. 18, 19. *cf.* Jonah 3. 4, 5.
b Is. 55. 7. Mic. 6. 8. Hos. 14. 1. *cf.* 2 Chr. 33. 12, 13. Deut. 24. 6, 10-13, 17. *cf.* Lk. 19. 8.
c ch. 18. 27, 28.
d Is. 43. 25. *cf.* Mic. 7. 18.
e ver. 20. ch. 18. 25, 29. *cf.* Rom. 7. 12. *cf.* Rom. 3. 21, 31.
f *cf.* Lk. 19. 21, 22. *cf.* Rom. 3. 4, 19.
g vers. 12, 13, etc.
h ver. 14. ch. 18. 27, 28.
i Ps. 62. 12. Rom. 2. 6, etc. *cf.* Rev. 20. 12, 13.
j ch. 32. 17, etc.
k ch. 24. 26, 27.
l ch. 1. 3. ch. 3. 22.
ch. 37. 1; ch. 40. 1. *m* *cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 25, 26; *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 32. *n* ch. 24. 27; ch. 3. 26, 27; *cf.* Lk. 1. 64.

The second part of the address here begins at the 10th verse, in which the lesson of the 18th chapter is once more enforced. They would now be ready to plead, and indeed were pleading, that before the unbending righteousness of God it was impossible that men should live. But the Lord replies as He had declared abundantly already, that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that they turn from their wickedness and live. For one who truly turned to Him, none of his past wickedness should be remembered against him. Could God go on with them in evil ways? Surely it would be impossible even for themselves to think so. There was then but one alternative, and God still pleaded as He had been pleading, that they turn from their evil ways that they might live. Why *would* they die? Their death was of their own will and not His. If, then, even one who had been righteous, trusting in this past righteousness of his, gave himself up to wickedness, none of his righteous deeds could be remembered: in his iniquity that he had committed, he would surely die. But what is rather emphasized is the mercy that awaits even the worst and vilest who should turn to God. Yet the people would rest the blame of all upon the Lord's ways as if they were not equal, whereas it was their own ways that are unequal, as their conscience must surely witness against them. Much as men may seek to stifle the voice that speaks for God within them, yet it will one day have full utterance when they will be compelled to hear it.

[2] We have now the confirmation of the judgment foretold in the destruction of the city: "And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, on the fifth of the month, that one who had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten. Now the hand of the

And the [o]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, they that inhabit those [p]waste places in the land of Israel speak, saying, [q]Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are [r]many; the land is given us for a possession. Therefore, say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Ye [s]eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes unto your [t]idols, and [u]shed blood: and shall [v]ye possess the land? Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye [w]defile every one his neighbor's wife: and shall ye possess the land? Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: As I live, surely they that are in the waste places shall [x]fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the [y]beasts to be devoured, and they that are in the strongholds and in the caves shall die of the [z]pestilence. And I will make the land a [a]desolation and an astonishment, and the [b]pride of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate that none shall pass through. And they shall [c]know that I am Jehovah, when I have made the land a desolation and an astonishment, because of all their abominations which they have committed.

o ch. 26. 1, etc.
p cf. Jer. 52. 16. *cf.* ch. 5. 3, 4.
q Is. 51. 2. Acts 7. 5.
r cf. Mic. 3. 11. *cf.* Jno. 8. 33, 34.
s Lev. 3. 17. Deut. 12. 16.
t ch. 18 6, etc. Deut. 4. 19. *cf.* Jer. 44. 15-19.
u ch. 9. 9. ch. 22. 6, 9, 27.
v cf. Jer. 7. 9, 10.
w ch. 18. 6, 11, 15. ch. 22 9-11. Jer. 5. 8, 9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1.
x ch. 5. 12 17. ch. 6. 11, 12.
y Jer. 15. 2, 3. *cf.* Rev. 19. 17, 18.
z Lev. 26. 25. Num 14. 12. Deut. 28. 21. Jer. 24. 10.
a ch. 6. 14.

Is. 6. 11; Mic. 7. 13. *b* ch. 7. 24, etc. *c* ch. 6. 7, etc.

Lord had been upon me in the evening before he that escaped came, and He had opened my mouth before he came to me in the morning, and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb." The date here is a significant one, "the twelfth year of our captivity" is, according to the numerical stamp upon it, the time of complete manifestation of the government of God with which the tenth month and the fifth day of the month combine to speak of the responsibility of man before God, of man who can never escape from the presence of Him whose eye is in every place, beholding the evil and the good. It is strange, however, to realize that the date here of the arrival of the man escaped from the city is more than sixteen months after it was taken. It has been naturally thought, therefore, that there must be a mistake in the text which, in common manuscripts of the Septuagint, seems to have been altered to suit. The well-known Alexandrian manuscript, however, agrees with the Hebrew which, as has been already seen, has its own internal evidence of being the correct one. No doubt the report of the capture had long preceded the actual coming of the refugee, delayed as he doubtless was by the conditions through which he had to make his way, and which there is no need to suppose to have been a direct one. It was probably after much wandering that the refugee had found a place at last where he could rest in safety. Until this time, then, the message waited: God dealing with the people in a way suited to the persistency with which they clung to their false hopes, and hardened themselves in obstinate pride of heart that would not listen to the plainest announcements. Now, with the living witness in their midst, they could at least doubt no more that the blow had actually fallen.

The first utterance of the prophet after this, which is addressed to those yet remaining in the desolate land, shows how readily still these hopes would rally: "Son of man," says the Lord to him, "they that inhabit those waste places in

And as for thee, son of man, the children of thy people [d]talk of thee by the walls and in the borders* of the houses, and speak one to another, everyone to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from Jehovah. And they [e]come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they [f]do them not: for with their [g]mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their plunder.† And behold, thou art unto them as a lovely [h]song, a pleasant voice, and one that playeth well upon an instrument; and they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass (behold, it cometh), then shall they [i]know that a prophet hath been among them.

*Or, "doors." †Or, "coveteousness."

d Jer. 11. 19. Jer. 18. 18. *cf.* Jno.7.32.
e *cf.* Is.29.13. Jer. 23. 35. *cf.* Jer. 42. 1-6. 20. *cf.* Mt. 22. 16, 17.
f *cf.* Jer. 43. 1-7. *cf.* Mt.7.24-27. *cf.* Jas.1.22-24.
g *cf.* Deut. 5. 28, 29. *cf.* Ps. 78. 36, 37. *cf.* Is 29.13. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 18.
h *cf.* Mk.6.20. *cf.* Jno.5.35.
i *cf.* Jer.28.9. ch. 2. 5. 2 Ki. 5. 8.

the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land, and we are many; the land is given us for a possession." Had this been the boldness of faith, it might indeed still have been admirable; for the inheritance, as we know, however much the people might even for long years lose possession of it, could never be finally alienated from the children of him to whom God had promised it. But this was another thing, as the character of those who made these utterances showed, mere desperadoes as they were, whose works declared them to be anything but Abraham's children. Their very conduct is held up before them, therefore. It was not for such to possess the land, surely, and they are warned by the Voice that speaks to them through the prophet: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: As I live, surely they that are in the waste places shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that are in the strongholds and in the caves shall die of the pestilence; and I will make the land a desolation and an astonishment, and the pride of her strength shall cease. And the mountains of Israel shall be desolate that none shall pass through them. And they shall know that I am Jehovah (how differently should they have learned this!) when I have made the land a desolation and an astonishment because of all their abominations which they have committed."

Among the exiles, however, a transient effect might seem to have been produced by the fulfilment of the prophet's words. They were now coming to hear the message that he had for them, sitting before God as if His people, and hearing words which, however, they never followed. "Behold," says the Lord to him, "thou art unto them as a lovely song, a pleasant voice, and one that playeth well upon an instrument; and they hear thy words, but they do them not"—there was no true faith with them. They would know that the prophet had spoken to them only by the voice of the judgment which would overtake them, as it had in fact already overtaken them. They would believe when it was too late, when the prediction was fulfilled, but that would be only to make it vain as to the whole meaning of it. It was no true faith that did not anticipate the fulfilment. Thus everywhere, as one sees, the ruin of man is complete. There could be no proper hope, no expectation any longer, and here the first utterance closes.

2 (xxxiv.): The shepherds and the Shepherd. 1 (1 6); The shepherds that feed but themselves.

2. [1] And the [j] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the [k] shepherds of Israel, prophesy; and say unto them, even unto the shepherds, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [l] Woe to the shepherds of Israel that [m] feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the [n] flock? Ye [o] eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; ye kill those that are fattened, but ye feed not the sheep. The [p] weak have ye not strengthened, nor have ye healed the [q] sick, nor have ye [r] bound up that which was broken, nor have ye [s] brought again that which was driven away, nor have ye [t] sought for that which was lost; but with [u] force and rigor ye have ruled over them. And they were [v] scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food to all the [w] beasts of the field, and were scattered. My sheep [x] wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my sheep have been scattered upon all the face of the earth, and there was [y] none that searched, or sought after them.

j ch. 33.1,etc. *k cf.* Jer.2.8. *cf.*Jno.10.12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 1-4 *l cf.* Jer.23.1. *cf.* Zech. 11. 17. *cf.* Mt.23.13, 14, etc. *m cf.* Mic. 3. 1-3, 11, 12. *cf.* Zeph. 3. 3, 4. *cf.* Is. 56. 11, 12. *cf.* 1 Sam. 8. 11-18. *n cf.* Jno. 21. 15-17. *cf.* Acts 20. 28, 29. *o cf.* Zech.11. 5, 16. *cf.* ch.22.25-27. *cf.* Jas. 5. 5. Ps. 53. 4. *p cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 14. *q cf.* Heb. 12. 13.

ctr. Lk. 4. 18. *r ctr.* Lk. 10. 34. *s ctr.* Mt 9. 36 with Lk. 15. 3-7. *t ctr.* Lk. 19. 10. *u cf.* Ex. 1. 13, 14; *cf.* Mt. 24. 49. *v* Jer. 23. 2; *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 17; *cf.* ch. 5. 10. *w* Is. 56. 9; *cf.* Jno. 10. 12. *x cf.* Jer. 13. 16; *cf.* Ps. 107. 4. *y cf.* Ps. 142. 4; *ctr.* Mk. 6. 34.

2. [1] In the chapter following, we have again no date given as to the time of the message, nor is there another until we come to the closing vision of the temple in the restored land, which is the only other in the book. That which follows here seems now to pour forth without any pause; and while we have once more judgment, in the opening, it is now manifestly connected with blessing, as the way to it. If the people are to be according to God, it must be as Isaiah has said (chap. iv. 4), "By the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning," or as Ezekiel himself has said elsewhere (chap. xx. 38) by purging out from them the rebels and those that transgress against God.

Thus we find that the judgment now before us is upon the false shepherds, those who only feed themselves, and make a prey of the sheep. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say unto them, even unto the shepherds, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the shepherds of Israel that feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill those that are fattened; but ye feed not the sheep. The weak have ye not strengthened, nor have ye healed the sick, nor have ye bound up that which was broken, nor have ye brought again that which was driven away, nor have ye sought that which was lost; but with oppression and rigor ye have ruled over them." How thoroughly this gives the character of those whom the Lord charged in His day with similar conduct. The rule of the rabbins was an oppressive one, and while they assumed to stand for God and for His word, self-seeking characterized them throughout, and thus of necessity the sheep were scattered: "They were scattered because there was no shepherd: and they became food to all the beasts of the field and were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill; yea, my sheep have been scattered upon all the face of the earth, and there was none that searched or sought after them." Nothing stirs the heart of

2 (7-10): The judgment of the shepherds and the deliverance of the flock.

2 Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah: As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely [z] because my sheep have been a prey, and my sheep have been food to all the beasts of the field, because there was no shepherd, and my shepherds searched not for my sheep, but the shepherds fed themselves and fed not my sheep: therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [a] against the shepherds; and I will [b] require my sheep at their hand, and cause them to [c] cease from feeding the sheep; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; and I will [d] deliver my sheep from their mouth, that they may not be food for them.

3 (11-16): The flock regathered with their portion from Jehovah.

3 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold I, even I, will [e] search for my sheep, and examine* [as to] them. As a [f] shepherd examineth his flock in the day that he is among his scattered flock, so will I examine* [as to] my flock, and deliver them out of all the [g] places whither they were scattered in the [h] cloudy and dark day. And

z *cf.* Lk.16.2. *cf.* Mt.21.43. *cf.*1 Sam.13. 14.

a ch.5 8,etc.
b ch. 33. 6-8. *cf.*Jer.13.20. *cf.*Heb.13. 17.
c *cf.* 1 Sam.2. 27-33. *cf.* 1 Ki. 13. 34.
d ver. 22. *cf.*1 Sam.17. 34, 35.
e *cf.* Ps. 80. 1. *cf.* Ps. 119. 176.
f *cf.* Lk. 15. 4-6. *cf.* Is. 40. 10, 11.
g *cf.* Lev. 26. 40, 41.
h *cf.* ch.30.3. *cf.* Jer. 13. 16, 17.

*Or, "seek out."

the true shepherd like the wanton abuse or neglect of the sheep, and here is One whose heart never needed to be stirred, but abides continually with His people, however long He may have patience, and however much circumstances may seem to argue that He has forgotten them. Therefore, as we shall see, it is Jehovah Himself who is manifested as the Shepherd of Israel, and that in the One raised up to them in tender grace; One who is Himself Man, and a stranger to nothing in man, except man's inherent evil.

2 The doom of the shepherds is therefore now announced. It is the judgment of love which smites for deliverance. There must be an end of this false assumption of the shepherd's place without the shepherd's heart—an assumption so peculiarly offensive to Him whose heart is with the sheep, who is afflicted in all the afflictions of His people, and who, when He arises for their help, will make a thorough work of it.

3 Thus the Lord declares that *He* will come in and search for His sheep and examine their condition. The language is human language, and we see here, according to what Ezekiel has shown us elsewhere, the likeness of a Man upon the throne. God speaks as if He were ignorant; therefore to examine into everything were a first necessity; and in truth there is what answers to this. God is careful to expose fully the evil with which He is dealing, that in His government He may be justified by all His creatures. This is the meaning of all those solemn assurances of a day of judgment to come, when the books are opened, and all the history of those brought before the judgment-seat is thoroughly entered into. There are crises of judgment which anticipate this, in which God allows the character of things fully to come out, allowing to come to a head the evil upon which He is going to smite, and bringing out the secret thoughts of men's hearts into open day. Thus as to His flock, Jehovah will examine their whole condition and all that has led to it. Their scatterings shall cease when the Voice is heard which His people know—which does not scatter, but brings together; and this, therefore, by removing every cause of

I will [i]bring them out from the peoples, and [j]gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their [k]own land; and I will [l]feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the water-courses, and in all the [m]habitable places of the country. I will feed them in a [n]good pasture, and upon the high [o]mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they [p]lie down in a good fold, and in fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I myself will feed my sheep, and I will [q]cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah. I will [r]seek that which was lost, and will bring again that which was driven away, and will [s]bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but the [t]fat and the strong I will destroy: I will feed them with [u]judgment.

4 (17-22): The sifting in mercy.

[4]And as for you, my flock, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I judge [v]between sheep and sheep, between the rams and the he-goats. Seemeth it a small

i cf. Jer. 31. 8, 9. ch. 11. 17, etc.
j Jer. 32. 37, etc.
k Amos 9. 14, 15, etc.
l cf. Mic. 7. 14, 15. ch. 36. 28, 29. *cf.* Is. 25. 6.
m Jer. 23. 3, 4, 8. *cf.* Mic. 4. 3, 4. *cf.* Zech. 3. 10.
n Ps. 23. 2. *cf.* Ps. 65. 11, 12. *cf.* Jer. 31. 12-14.
o Is. 25. 6. Is. 65. 25.
p Jer. 33. 12, 13.
q cf. Song 1. 7, 8. *cf.* Is. 11. 6, 7. *cf.* Hos 2. 18.

r vers. 4, 11; *cf.* Is. 40. 11; *cf.* Mic. 4. 6, 7; *cf.* Mt. 9. 36-38. *s cf.* Is. 61. 1-3 with Lk. 10. 33-35; *cf.* Lk. 15. 4-7. *t* ch. 39. 17-19; *cf.* Deut. 32. 15. *u cf.* Amos 4. 1-3; *cf.* Jer. 23. 15. *v* vers. 20-22; ch. 20. 37, 38; *cf.* Jas. 5. 1-8; *cf.* Zech. 10. 3.

scattering. Yet scattering may be at times the very thing that is of God, which He permits to avoid worse evil: nevertheless it is only permission for a brief time. What is in His heart is gathering, not scattering. And so He declares that He will deliver His flock out of all the places whither they were scattered in the cloudy and dark day. He has realized the darkness of it, and He will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and bring them into their own land. It has been their own land in His mind all the way through; and if for a time it has refused to own them as its inhabitants, there is no setting aside of the purposes which, with God, can never be repented of. The mountains of Israel shall welcome them again, and all the springs shall be set running for their benefit, and all the habitable places of the country shall be filled with them. The mountains, which so peculiarly characterize the land of Israel, shall provide good pasture for them, lifted up and kissed as it were by the light of heaven. That is where God would ever have His people feed, and there are the fat pastures to be provided now. He will feed them and make them to lie down. How thoroughly these things go together in His mind —provision and rest, in which all the evils that have afflicted them in the long past shall be put away, the lost restored, the wounded bound up, the weak strengthened; but, on the other hand, the fat and the strong destroyed! We know what this means: God is thinking of those who have been feeding themselves at the cost of the sheep, and have become fat through the spoiling of others. They of necessity will be the objects of swift, sure judgment: "I will feed the flock with judgment," says the Lord.

[4] The searching which the Lord institutes is to go down deeper than merely with certain heads of the people: "Behold," says the Lord, "I judge between sheep and sheep," not merely between sheep and shepherds. "The rams and the he-goats" seem to speak not alike of objects of His judgment. The rams belong to the flock themselves, but the he-goats are alien to it. They are, as we know, in the Lord's own picture of judgment, representatives of those whom the Son of Man puts upon His left hand, as He puts the sheep upon His

thing unto you to have eaten up the [w]good pasture, but ye must [x]tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture, and to have [y]drunk of the clear waters, but ye must [z]foul the residue with your feet? And as for my sheep, they eat that which ye have [a]trodden with your feet, and drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto them: Behold, I, even I, will judge between the [b]fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because ye [c]thrust with side and with shoulder, and push all the weak ones with your horns, till ye have [d]scattered them abroad:—I will [e]save my flock, that they may no more be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

5 (23-31): Immanuel.

[5]And I will set up [f]one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant [g]David: he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I Je-

w cf. Num. 16. 9, 13. *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 12-17. *ctr.* Acts 20. 33-35. *cf.* Mic. 2. 2.

x cf. Mt. 15. 6-9. *cf.* Mt. 23. 13. *cf.* Lk. 11 52. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 2. 17.

y cf. 2 Cor. 6. 1. *ctr.* Acts 4. 20.

z cf. ch. 32. 2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *cf.* Phil. 1. 15 *ctr.* 1 Cor. 2. 13.

a ver. 18.

b vers. 10, 17. *cf.* Ps. 72. 2, 4. *cf.* Ps. 22. 24, 26, 29. *cf.* Gal. 6. 12, 13

c vers. 3-5; *ctr.* Rom. 15. 1; *ctr.* 1 Thess. 2. 7, 8; *cf.* Gal. 5. 15; *cf.* Zech. 11. 5; *cf.* Lk. 13. 14-16. *d* Jer. 23. 1; Jer. 50. 17; *cf.* Lk. 11. 23; *cf.* Jno. 10. 12. *e* Jer. 23. 4; vers. 11-16; *cf.* Is. 40. 11. *f cf.* Mic. 5. 2-5; *cf.* Zech. 13. 7; *cf.* Jno. 10. 11 with Heb. 13. 20. *g* ch. 37. 24, 25; *cf.* Is. 11. 1; *cf.* Is. 55. 3, 4 with Acts 13. 34-37; Jer. 30. 9; Hos. 3. 5.

right. Among the sheep there are those who have from God a certain natural place as leaders, and when God is working among His people, as in the days to come, these must of necessity come to the front. Leaders among the people of God are always recognized. It is the *character* of the leading which determines as to what it is before God. The true leader is he who leads by the Word itself, and to faith in it, and not in the leader, therefore. And he who says, "Follow me as I follow Christ", puts Christ before the eyes of His people as the measure by which he himself and all his leading is to be measured. How good to have those who, if they have found a bit of good pasture, must run to tell others of it! And this is a kind of leading open to all that have hearts for it. How different the conduct of those of whom the Lord speaks here, who not only have eaten up all the good pasture for themselves, but must tread down and spoil what is left of it: not satisfied with drinking of the clear waters, they must foul the residue with their feet. How this applies to such as rose up in Israel after this, when the rule of the priest was changed for the rule of the rabbi, is obvious to all; who, as our Lord said, were "teaching for doctrine the commandments of men," and putting their own word before the word of God. They made the flock eat what they had trodden with their feet, and drink what they had fouled with them. And it is not in Israel only that these things have taken place. Alas, how Christendom has copied them in fullest detail! But God is going to judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. The lean sheep are His objects now—the people who have suffered from these things, and whom He sees suffering. Thus He will save His flock that they may no more be a prey, and will judge between sheep and sheep.

[5]Now we come to what is God's complete thought for them. He has one true Shepherd that is to be set over them; in that sense, only one; there is not another, and "He shall feed them, even my servant David." "The introduction of David without anything further or particular," says Schroeder, "confirms what is stated by Hengstenberg, that the Messiah, the glorious offspring of David, had in the time of the prophet been for long a lesson of the catechism."

hovah will be [h]their God, and my servant David [i]prince among them: I Jehovah have spoken it. And I will make with them a [j]covenant of peace, and will cause evil [k]beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell in [l]safety in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will [m]make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the [n]shower to come down in its season; there shall be [o]showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall [p]yield its fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase; and they shall be in [q]safety in their land, and they shall [r]know that I am Jehovah, when I have [s]broken the bands of their yoke and have delivered them out of the [t]hand of those that serve themselves of them.

h ch. 36. 28, etc. Is. 43. 2, 3. *i* *cf.* Josh. 5. 13–15. *cf.* Is. 9. 6, 7. *cf.* Acts 5. 31. *j* ch. 37. 26. *cf.* Jer. 31. 31–33 with Heb. 8. 8–13 *k* *cf.* Lev. 26. 6. *cf.* Is. 35. 9. *cf.* Hos. 2. 18–23. *l* Jer. 23. 6, etc. *m* *cf.* Gen. 12. 2. *cf.* Is. 19. 24. *cf.* Zech. 8. 13, 23.

cf. Is. 2. 2–5. *n* Lev. 26. 4; Ps. 68. 9. *o* Deut. 28. 12; *cf.* Ps. 72. 6; *cf.* Is. 32. 15; *cf.* Is. 44. 3; *cf.* Mal. 3. 10–12. *p* ch. 47. 12; Ps. 67. 6; Is. 35. 1, 2. *q* Is. 32. 18. *r* ch. 33. 29, etc. *s* Ps. 107. 16; Jer. 2. 20; *cf.* Ps. 116. 16; *cf.* Lev. 26. 13. *t* *cf.* Is. 52. 2, 3; *cf.* Ps. 18. 17.

That is true, and it is sweet to think how God necessarily supposes that they will know who is spoken of here, the true David, of whom the one in history was only a type. He is to take up David's place and office in a more glorious fashion: David's Son is also David's Lord, "the Beloved," as His name means; and our hearts recognize Him in this way: "He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd." And thus alone it can be that Jehovah will be their God. Thus alone will "the covenant of peace" be theirs—the peace by a covenant never to be broken, and as a consequence, all nature at peace with them, evil beasts gone: "They shall dwell in safety in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods." Eden, but a better Eden, has come for them; and from the hill of God, His dwelling-place among them, the object for every eye and every heart, blessing shall flow out to all the places round about. Heaven yields its seasonable showers: "There shall be showers of blessing." Thus the curse is removed, and the land yields its increase. The tree of the field comes to its fruit, not casts it, and in all this they shall know that it is Jehovah who has brought them into this blessing; it is Jehovah who has burst the bands of their yoke and delivered them; it is Jehovah who has come in with the deliverance which is now eternal. They shall be no more a prey, nor shall they fear it. There shall be no danger nor thought of danger. How blessed to think of such a time at hand, and for a world trodden by the feet of oppressors, as the world has been.

But the attention is turned once more to God's central figure for them: "I will raise up for them," says He, "a plant of renown." Neither shame nor hunger can be their portion when God has done this. "A plant for a name" is the literal rendering, which reminds us at once of the Name in which is all the revelation of God for man, which has been in His thought from the beginning—revelation come to its completion, and all things taking shape according to this. For this Immanuel (Jehovah, revealed in Christ) is among them; the bond of His humanity is never to be broken, and Israel as His people are compassed with those blessed arms which are yet to be seen about the whole creation of God, linking it forever with God. They need not fear, then, to recognize the weakness which as creatures necessarily belongs to them. It is the wholesome lesson which they have taken so long to learn, and which we are all so slow to learn, though a very simple one: "Ye my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord Jehovah."

And they shall [u]no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beast of the earth devour them; but they shall dwell in safety, and none shall make them afraid. And I will [v]raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with [w]hunger in the land, nor bear the [x]shame* of the nations any more. And they shall know that I Jehovah their God am [y]with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are [z]my people, saith the Lord Jehovah. And ye, [a]my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are men: I am [b]your God, saith the Lord Jehovah.

*Or, "reproach."

[u] ch. 36. 15. Jer. 30. 10. *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 10. *cf.* Heb. 10. 17.
[v] *cf.* Is. 4. 2. *cf.* Is. 11. 1. *cf.* Is. 61. 3.
[w] *cf.* Is. 49, 9, 10.
[x] ch. 36. 3-7. *cf.* Is. 51. 22, 23.
[y] Ps. 46. 7, 11. *cf.* Is 8. 9, 10.
[z] *cf.* Hos 2. 23.
[a] ch. 36. 38. *cf.* Is 40. 11. Ps. 78. 52 *cf.* Jno. 10. 11, 16, 26-30.
[b] ver. 24: *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 16-18.

What does this mean?—that we are men. The word is "adam": God "called their name Adam, in the day that He created them"—a name which comes from *adamah*, "the ground." Yes, just to learn that we are men! Have we learnt it? Do we act and speak as if we had truly learnt it? That they were formed out of the clay is not the whole matter, of course, and it is not what made them the offspring of God, or in His likeness, but it is the suited word to keep us humble; yet, even so, it is a word of triumph too, of *God's* triumph, for in them the dust of the ground is made to shine with a new glory. He has taken up this very dust, not putting it away as if the material thing were unsuited for Him, but developing all the capacities which are latent in it, which are not capacities of the spirit but *for* the spirit, in which matter itself becomes a fitted servant of the spirit, and God as the Creator is revealed all through in the goodness of His work. The dust of the ground is become man, and God Himself has met us in Christ, claiming man, even man's flesh as His, of which He is not, and never will be, ashamed. Is it not the display of His glory, is it not His triumph, this wonder of divine condescension, this stooping of divine love?! Yes, men are thus the sheep of His pasture, and they have no cause to forget, but ever to remember and thank and bless Him ever that they are *men*.

Sec. 2.

We have now a prophecy of a wholly different character; it is a natural corollary of what we have had before us. Israel are now the people of God. But "was not Esau Jacob's brother?" It is God's own challenge to Israel in Malachi: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord. Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel" (Mal. i. 2-5). This is the question which comes up here, Esau was Jacob's brother. Were they so unlike each other after all? Was he not Jacob "the supplanter?"—the man with the hand upon the heel of his brother; the man always intent upon his own gain and little careful as to his means of acquirement; the man who believed in himself and who, if he cannot fully trust God, must act for himself? whose motto, "God helps those who help

SECTION 2 (Chap. XXXV.)

The enemy answered.

And the [c]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against [d]Mount Seir, and prophesy against it, and say unto it, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [e]against thee, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and I will make thee a [f]desolation and an astonishment. I will lay thy [g]cities waste, and thou shalt be a desolation: and thou shalt [h]know that I am Jehovah. Be-

[c] ch. 21. 1, etc.
[d] *cf.* ch. 20. 46. ch. 25. 8.
[e] ch. 5. 8. Nah. 2. 13.
[f] *cf.* ch. 5. 14, 15. ch. 25. 13.
[g] *cf.* Joel 3. 19.
[h] *cf.* Mal. 1. 3, 4. vers. 9, 12, etc.

themselves" has had wide circulation. It is but the picture of a fallen being, and Jacob was such, we know. Are any of us different? We may take comfort then that God can yet say: "I loved Jacob!" Nay, that He can call Himself "The God of Jacob," which is but another way of saying, *The God of grace.* Jacob has another name, as we know, but that is what he is by the work of God, by that only. This "worm" Jacob can only by divine fashioning become a threshing instrument which shall "thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff" (Isa. xli. 15). Upon these two names, Jacob and Israel, God dwells in contrast all through their history. It is the history essentially of every soul that has learnt what divine grace is; as Esau's, on the other hand, is the history of a soul that has never learnt grace, and whose misery is this, not only that he has never learnt it, but resists it.

This lesson, which God is holding up before us all, Esau might have learnt, but did not. God has sworn that He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, and Ezekiel has borne witness to this. But He has but one way of acceptance and blessing, and not another; and he that will not learn this must be without the blessing, akin as he may be naturally, as indeed he is, to his brother that has obtained it. But thus there arises the perpetual grudge and enmity that the Edomite has against the Israelite, and it is an enmity which is really to God, to God's thoughts and ways. Thus we need not wonder if it come into special consideration here, just when Israel comes into his blessing, which is also the time when Edom is finally cast out.

The prophet is instructed to set his face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it, and say: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against thee, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and will make thee a desolation and an astonishment." Mount Seir is Edom's possession, a "rough," or "rugged place," as the word means. Esau has chosen for himself; therefore he has not chosen well. Does ever any one choose well who chooses for himself? When Abram stood with Lot in the land which God had told him was to be his by divine gift, the man of faith could say in the liberality which comes from faith, "Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right: or if thou depart to the left hand, then I will go to the right," but Lot was of another mind: "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other" (Gen. xiii. 9-11). Alas, they were separated by more than locality, and we know the

cause thou hast had perpetual [i]enmity, and hast given over the children of Israel to the power of the sword in the time of their [j]calamity, in the time of the iniquity of the end; therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will appoint thee to [k]blood, and blood shall pursue thee; since thou hast not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue thee. And I will make Mount Seir a desolation and an astonishment, and [l]cut off from it him that passeth through, and him that returneth; and I will [m]fill his mountains with his slain: in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy watercourses shall they fall that are slain with the sword. I will make thee [n]perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not be inhabited: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be [o]mine, and we will possess it,

i *cf.* ch.25.12. *cf.* Gen. 27. 41, 42. *cf.* Ps.137.7.
j *cf.*Jer.18 21. *cf.* Obad. 13.
k *cf.* Ps. 109. 16-18. *cf.* Is.63.1-6. *cf.* Rev. 16. 5-7.
l *cf.*ch.29.11. *cf.* 2 Chron. 15. 5, 6.
m ch. 31. 12, etc. *cf.* Amos 1. 12. *cf.* Is. 34. 2-6, etc.
n ch. 25. 13. Jer. 14. 17, 18. Zeph. 2. 9.
o ch 36. 5. *cf.* Ps. 83. 4-12. *cf.* Obad. 12, 13.

after-history of Lot's fatal choice. In a sense, God was before him also. This plain of Jordan was it not like the Garden of God? All this that spoke so alluringly to his heart, was it not of God, and good? Why should he not enjoy what God had made so manifestly for enjoyment? Alas, how is it that we can forget how sin has disordered everything, even to the very eyes that look upon things now? And Lot chose, as we know, what did not become to him a Mount Seir only because God had mercy towards him—only that God forbade it to be that to him! Lot was to be driven out, as he was driven out, and that was God's mercy to him; but Edom, the profane person, had chosen in deliberate profaneness, and Mount Seir accordingly was his.

Alas, when God has to give according to one's own desire merely, and not according to what would be for His heart a gift! Mount Seir was Esau's choice; yet it could not, after all, remain his. The things that we choose naturally are things which cannot abide because we would have them do so; for there is a judgment of God which may follow, though we see it not, of which we may be warned and yet have no eyes to see. And Edom was to know that God is Jehovah, the true and unchanging God in what He threatens, as in what He promises. Yet the portion of Jacob invited Edom too. But the kind of craving he had for it only stirred in his heart as enmity against its possessor; and thus Edom is the typical enemy of Israel through all his history. That is the point here: "Because thou hast had perpetual enmity, and hast given over the children of Israel to the power of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time of the iniquity of the end; therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will appoint thee to blood, and blood shall pursue thee. Since thou hast not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue thee." We have already had this in brief in a former prophecy, but God returns to dwell upon it for the lesson that is in it, a lesson that we may all well ponder. He that will nurse enmity in his soul shall be himself pursued by the enmity that he nurses, and when this is enmity to God and to His grace, however he may disguise it, it will necessarily be judged as such, and the end is sure. Edom is the ancient infidel as to God. He sees Israel's land, but he does not see Jehovah's presence in it. Thus he thinks to possess himself of that in which he finds Jehovah as his adversary, and the bitter fruit of his unbelief is made good

whereas [p]Jehovah was there: therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will do [q]according to thine anger, and according to thine envy, that which thou hast done out of thy hatred against them; and I will [r]make myself known among them when I shall judge thee. And thou shalt know that I Jehovah have [s]heard all thine insults which thou hast uttered against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to devour. And ye have [t]magnified yourselves against me with your mouth, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard it. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: When the [u]whole earth rejoiceth I will make thee a desolation. As [v]thou didst rejoice over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, the whole of it: and they shall [w]know that I am Jehovah.

p cf. Ps. 48. 1-3. cf. Is. 12. 6.
q Ps. 137 7. cf. Ps. 9. 16. cf. Mt. 7. 2.
r cf. Ps. 76. 1-3. cf. Is 49. 26. cf. Is. 60. 16.
s cf. Ps 94. 9, 10. cf. Is. 37. 4, 23.
t cf. Is.10.13-15. cf. Mal 3.13. cf.2 Pet 2.18.
u cf.Is.14.7,8. cf. Is.65.13-15. cf.Lk.16 25.
v ch. 36. 2-5. cf.Prov.17.5. cf.Lam.4.21. cf. Obad. 12, 15.
w vers. 4, 9. ch. 39. 6, etc.

to him as what he has indeed chosen, little as he knew the character of his choice. Was there not plenty in Israel to provoke righteous wrath against them? Yes, and God had to show this as against their misdeeds.

But the enemy's wrath is not righteous; it is of another character. It is against Jehovah at bottom, as all unbelief is; and this is what comes out in result here. The question is not between Edom and Israel, but between Edom and God. If they said of the mountains of Israel that they were desolate, was it not true? But they did not discern the difference between chastening and rejection: therefore they said, "They are given us to devour." But if Israel can for the time cast themselves out of the very land that is their own, Edom can never enjoy it: "Ye have magnified yourselves against *Me* with your mouth, and have multiplied your words against *Me*. I have heard it. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee a desolation. As thou didst rejoice over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee. Thou shalt be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, the whole of it; and they shall know"—what a wail there is once more in this, "they shall know—that I am Jehovah."

Sec. 3.

We have now the work of restoration, of re-organization, accomplished first of all in the land once more becoming Israel's. Jehovah claims it from its would-be possessors, and gives it back to Israel. But, that they may enjoy it, a deeper work must be done in the nation itself, and thus we have the Lord sprinkling clean water upon them to make them clean, and putting within them a new heart and a new spirit. In the third place we have the resurrection of the nation as such, their political resurrection, the embodiment in a fitting manner of the new life; and for this Judah and Ephraim, so long sundered, must come together. God can lose nothing of that which, through grace, is now to be owned as His. There must be no final triumph of the power of evil anywhere. The work of restoration is thus to be completed; but the seal of their new condition and the perfect blessing which is to be theirs forever—the return of the glory of God, which Ezekiel had seen depart, but which henceforth is to be in brighter display in the restored city—remains yet to be given

SECTION 3 (Chaps. xxxvi., xxxvii).

Restoration and reorganization.

1 (xxxvi. 1-15): The land claimed by Jehovah and given back to Israel.

1. And thou, son of man, prophesy unto the [x]mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because the [y]enemy hath said against you, Aha! and the ancient high places are [z]ours in possession: therefore prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because, yea, because they have [a]made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the nations, and ye are taken up on the lips of talkers, and the [b]defamation of the people: therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord

x *cf.* ch.6.2,3. *cf.* ch 33.28. *cf.* ch.34 14. *cf.* ch.37.22. *cf.* Mic. 4 1.
y ch. 35. 15. ch. 25. 3. ch. 26. 2.
z ver. 5. *cf.* Deut. 32. 13. ch. 35. 10. *cf.* Jer.49.1.
a *cf.* 1s. 10. 13-15. *cf.* Mic.3.12.
b Deut.28.37. 1 Ki. 9. 7, 8. Ps.44.13,14. *cf.* Ps.79.10.

us. It has a place by itself, therefore, as the crown of their blessed condition when the city itself shall be known upon earth as the dwelling-place of God with man, *Jehovah Shammah*, "The Lord is there."

1. We have, first of all, Jehovah's word to the land itself. This is in plain connection with the claim which the Edomite enemy had made to possess it. It must be vindicated from this reproach, therefore. The land is really Jehovah's land, and He certainly has never forfeited it, and will never give it up to those who are His enemies. Israel are to possess it upon the surest ground possible—that of God's *grace*. They are to be sojourners with Him, to be His guests, and thus to know all the resources of His hand, as well as the full protection necessitated by this relationship.

Thus Ezekiel is instructed now to prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say: "Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of Jehovah: thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, and the ancient high places have become ours in possession: therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because, yea, because they have made you desolate, and have swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession to the remnant of the nations, and ye are taken up on the lips of talkers, and the defamation of the people; therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah." These mountains have been addressed before, in the sixth chapter, but in far other terms. They were then the seats of an idolatry which dared to lift its head in a special manner in the high places of the land. Desolation had come upon them, therefore; and the enemy had taken it up as a reproach both to them and to Jehovah Himself. But these mountains of Israel, very far from being what we have seen Mount Seir to be (the indication of the folly of Esau's choice and the barrenness of the portion which had thus become his own), were characteristically verdant and fruitful mountains, the places of pasture for the flock; they also were in testimony to the condition of a people whom Jehovah owned as His: round about whom He stood as the mountains round about Jerusalem. Their foundations must be upon the earth, but their tops were lifted high into the light and glory of heaven. How different from their condition since!—a reproach, in their present barrenness, in the sight of those that look upon them—the types, as so many suppose, of the hopeless forfeiture of all things by the people to whom they belonged! How often Jehovah de-

Jehovah to the [c]mountains and to the hills, to the water-courses and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and to the [d]cities that are forsaken, which are become a prey and derision to the residue of the nations that are round about; therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Surely in the fire of my [e]jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the nations, and against all [f]Edom, that have appointed my land unto themselves for a possession with the joy of all their heart, with [g]spite of soul, to take possession of it for a prey. Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains and to the hills, to the water-courses and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my wrath, because ye have borne the [h]reproach of the nations; therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I have [i]lifted up my hand [saying], Surely the [j]nations that are about you, they shall bear their shame. And ye, mountains of Israel, shall [k]shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; for they are at [l]hand to come. For, behold, I am [m]for you, and will [n]turn unto you, and ye shall be [o]tilled and sown. And

c ver. 1. *cf.* Lk. 19. 41-44.
d ch. 6. 14. *cf.* Jer. 33. 10 13.
e Deut. 4. 24. *cf.* Is. 66. 15, 16.
f ch. 25. 12-14.
g Amos 1. 11.
h vers. 3, 15. *cf.* Ps. 123. 3, 4.
i ch. 20. 5, 15. Deut. 32. 40. *cf.* Rev. 10. 5.
j *cf.* Jer. 25. 9, 15 29. *cf.* Amos 1. 3, 6, 9, 11, 13. *cf.* Amos 2. 1. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 4, etc.
k *cf.* Ps. 65. 9–13. *cf.* Is. 27. 6. *cf.* Hos. 2. 21-23.
l *cf.* ch. 12. 25 *cf.* Jas. 5 8, 9.
m *cf.* Rom. 8. 31. *ctr.* ch. 6, 2, 3.
n *cf.* Mal. 3 7; *cf.* Zech. 8. 12.
o *cf.* Joel 3. 18; *cf.* Ps. 60. 1.

clared here that He has pledged Himself by His never-to-be-broken word, to their revival!

That word therefore takes in all the land: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to the mountains and to the hills, to the water-courses and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and the cities that are forsaken, which have become a prey and a derision to the remnant of the nations that are round about; therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the remnant of the nations, and against the whole of Edom who have appointed my land unto themselves for a possession with the joy of all their heart, with spite of soul, to take possession of it for a prey." This is all that the enemy could do. Make it yield its fruit to him, he could not; and already we see this in the long Sabbaths in which the land has rested while Israel has been banished from it. To none of the nations would it yield its strength, and the people who are in present possession are just those who can be readily characterized as mere plunderers, and nothing else. But this suits, in the meanwhile, Jehovah's purpose. With all this, they are as it were, His watchmen against the intrusion of those who might take it up with more serious intent to make their own out of it. The hordes that sweep over it still, the government under which it remains and under which everything like prosperity is impossible, all this is but the sign that the land is still waiting for her true inhabitants.

The prophet is instructed, therefore, to speak to the mountains and to the hills, to the water-courses and to the valleys, and to declare to them that they shall yet shoot forth their branches and yield their fruit to His people Israel, as a people who are at His hand, ready to come. The people, as we know, are kept as distinct as ever they were, under the same repression meanwhile as their land has been. Jerusalem is to "be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." If we see, as surely we do see now, the

I will [p]multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, the whole of it; and the cities shall be [q]inhabited, and the waste places shall be built. And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your [r]former estate, yea, I will do [s]better [unto you] than at your beginnings: and ye shall [t]know that I am Jehovah. And I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall [u]possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth [v]bereave them of children. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because they say unto you, Thou [w]devourest men and hast bereaved thy nation, therefore thou shalt devour men [x]no more, neither [y]bereave thy nation any more, saith the Lord Jehovah; neither will I cause thee to hear any more the [z]reproach of the nations, and thou shalt no more bear the [a]scorn of the peoples, nor shalt thou cause thy nation to stumble any more, saith the Lord Jehovah.

2 (xxxvi. 16-38): A new heart and a new spirit given with increase.

2. And the [b]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land they [c]defiled it by their way and by their doings: their way was before me as the [d]uncleanness of a woman in her separation. And I [e]poured out my

p ver. 37. *cf.* Is 60. 2.
q *cf.* Jer. 30. 18 21. *cf.* Is 51. 3. *cf.* Is 61. 4.
r Jer 30 18. Jer. 31. 38-40. *cf.* Obad.19-21.
s *cf.* Is.30.26. *cf.* Joel 3. 18-21. *cf.* Hag. 2. 6-9 *cf.* Zech. 8. 11-15 *cf.* Heb. 8. 8-13.
t ch.35.9,etc.
u *cf.* Jer 32. 15, 42 44.
v *ctr.* Jer. 15. 7
w *cf.* Num. 13. 32.
x *cf.* ch. 37. 25-28. *cf.* Amos 9. 14, 15. *cf.* Is. 60. 20-22.
y *cf.*Zech.9.8. *ctr.* Is.60.21. *cf* ch. 7. 19.
z ch. 34. 29. ver. 6. Is. 54 4. *cf.* Mic. 7.

8 10. *a cf.* Zeph. 2. 8; *cf.* Ps. 89. 50. *b* ch. 35. 1, etc. *c cf.* Lev. 18. 24-28; *cf.* Num. 35, 33, 34; *cf.* Ps. 106. 37, 38; *cf.* Jer. 2. 7, etc. *d cf.* Lev. 15. 19, etc. with Lk. 8. 43, etc. *e* ch. 21. 31, etc. *cf.* Ps. 74. 1.

people gathering back, and the land sought to by them for a new occupation, we have in all this the proof that God is ready to turn His face towards them and to their land alike. It would then be seen far other than as the eye of the stranger has seen and the scoff of the infidel has declared it, a land that has but devoured its inhabitants. It is to be, as the faithfulness of God is pledged to make it, a land that shall be "the glory of all lands," a land upon which His eye rests continually: "I will multiply men upon you—all the house of Israel, the whole of it; and the cities shall be inhabited, and the waste places shall be built, and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and be fruitful." Thus has God pledged Himself; and, as in other cases, if He restore it is not merely to the old fruitfulness, to the condition at the beginning, but to one far better than at the beginning. The reproach of the nations shall be entirely removed from it, and His glory shall be more fully seen than ever where men have assumed to see His dishonor.

2. The prophet now turns from the land to the people themselves. The condition of the land was but the reflection of their own condition. If Joshua sees the people flee before their enemies, and in astonishment and dismay falls before God to ask, "And what wilt Thou do for thy great name?" the sufficient and only answer is, "Israel hath sinned." But Israel has resisted the lesson of their scattered condition, and have turned it even into a matter of self-glorying as if it were the sins of others that they were bearing and making atonement for! Thus they have interpreted Isaiah liii. God here asserts against them that it is judgment on account of their condition. They have defiled the land with their idolatry, and He scattered them among the nations, and they

wrath upon them for the *f*blood which they had shed upon the land, and because they had defiled it with their *g*idols. And I *h*scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries: *i*according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they came to the nations whither they went, they *j*profaned my holy name when it was said of them, These are the *k*people of Jehovah, and are gone forth out of his land. But I have pity for my *l*holy name which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations whither they went. Therefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I do *m*not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name which ye have profaned among the nations whither ye went. And I will *n*sanctify my great name which hath been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the *o*nations shall know that I am Jehovah, saith the Lord Jehovah, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. And I will *p*take you from among the nations, and *q*gather you out of all the countries, and will *r*bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean *s*water upon you, and ye shall be clean:

f *cf.* ch. 23 37. *cf.* Gen. 4. 10, 11.
g *cf.* Is. 66 17, 18.
h Lev. 26. 38. Amos 9. 9.
i ch. 39. 24. *cf.* Gal 6 7, 8.
j *cf.* Is. 52 5 with Rom 2. 24
k *cf.* Ex. 32. 11-13. *cf.* Josh. 7. 9. *cf.* Jer. 33. 24.
l ch 20 9, 14. 22. *cf.* Ps. 79. 9.
m *cf.* Deut 7. 7, 8. *cf.* Dan. 9. 18.
n *cf.* ch. 28. 22. *cf.* Lev. 10. 3.
o ch. 39. 27, 28 *cf.* Ps. 126 2
p ch. 34. 13. *cf.* Ps. 107. 2, 3.
q *cf.* Is. 11. 11-16. *cf.* Is. 43. 5, 6. *cf.* Jer. 30. 3.
r *cf.* Jer. 23. 3-8.

cf. Is. 27. 12, 13; *cf.* Jer 31. 8, 9; *cf.* Jer 32. 43, 44. *s* *cf.* Lev. 14. 5 7; *cf.* Is. 52. 15; *cf.* Tit. 3. 5, 6; *cf.* Jno. 3. 5; *cf.* Heb. 10. 22; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 23; Eph. 5. 26.

have been dispersed through the countries. According to their ways and according to their doings He has judged them: nor can they say that it was for their sin before they were carried captive into Babylon, but that since then they have been clear. They were, in fact, permitted to go back into their land, in order that they might, with the lesson of their past before them, receive the One who alone could atone for the iniquities they had committed. But to these sins they have added the crowning sin of rejecting Him who came to them, aforeannounced by the prophets, with the signs and wonders with which God sealed the testimony that He gave. Thus they have bought for themselves an Aceldama with the price of His betrayal. Thank God, for this also there can be and will be forgiveness; for grace shall yet manifest itself for them above all their sins! But how vain to plead that that to which the prophet looks on here, was the termination of their scattered condition—a condition which was expressly the judgment for their sins—when we go on to that which follows here! Have they ever been taken from among the nations and gathered out from all the countries and brought to their own land? Have they ever, with a new heart and a new spirit, entered upon the possession of that from which they are no more to be alienated? It is impossible honestly to read a prophecy such as we have here and not to see that the scattering which began at Babylon has never really come to its end for God; but that they are still abiding, as Hosea declared they should abide, "many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim" (Hos. iii. 4). Their idolatrous ensigns have indeed passed from them; but recover themselves from that in which their sins have involved them, they never can until, as another prophet has declared, "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son . . . In

from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. And I will give you a [t]new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will [u]take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a [v]heart of flesh. And I will put my [w]Spirit within you, and cause you to [x]walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the [y]land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be [z]my people, and I will be your God. And I will [a]save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the [b]grain, and will multiply it, and lay [c]no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the trees and the [d]increase of the field, so that ye may receive no more the reproach of famine among the nations. And ye shall [e]remember your evil ways, and your doings that were not good; and ye shall [f]loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. [g]Not for your sake do I this, saith the Lord Jehovah, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.

t *cf.* Deut. 30. 6. *cf.* Ps. 51. 10. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17.
u ch. 11. 19, 20. *cf.* Zech. 7, 12. *cf.* Mt. 13. 5, 20, 21.
v *cf.* Heb. 8. 10.
w ch. 37. 14. *cf.* Joel 2. 28, 29. *cf.* Is. 44. 3. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 13.
x ch. 37. 24. *cf.* Ps. 15. 2. *cf.* Gal. 6. 15, 16.
y ch. 28. 25, 26.
z Jer. 30. 22. Hos. 1. 10. Zech. 13. 9. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 16-18. *cf.* Rev. 21. 3, 7.
a *cf.* Hos. 14. 2, 4, 8. *cf.* Zech. 13. 1. *cf.* Jer. 14. 1-6

1. *cf.* Mt. 1. 21. *b* vers. 8, 9; *cf.* Hos. 2. 21, 23; Ps. 65. 13. *c ctr.* Joel 2. 21-27; *d cf.* Ps. 67. 6, 7; *ctr.* Deut. 29. 22. *e* ch. 16. 61-63. *cf.* Dan. 9. 4-20. *f cf.* Job 42. 6; *cf.* Isa. 6. 5. *g* Deut. 9. 5; Ps. 115. 1; *cf.* Tit. 3. 3-6.

that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 1). God will fulfil His word, but only in His appointed way, and the cleansing of His people can only come when He sprinkles upon them that "clean water" which, as a type of old, declared the virtue of a sacrifice before completed—not a work of atonement as then newly wrought, but the verity of that which, blessed be God, still abides for them when faith in them shall be able to claim it.

There is a remarkable connection here between the 51st psalm and the prophet's declaration. This is the answer from God to their prayer, as it is prophetically given us in the psalm referred to. The prayer is: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. li. 7, 10). Put this in connection with the promise here: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean . . . and I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you." How plainly the one corresponds to the other, while there is indeed, as one might expect, a greater fulness in the answer than in the prayer! That this 51st psalm is, in fact, the voice of the people when they shall turn to God in the latter days, has been seen by many, and the proof of it has been fully given elsewhere. (See Ps. li., *Notes.*) It was David's voice that utters it, no doubt, but the personal application to himself is plainly not all, and this "Purge me with hyssop" clearly refers to the language in Ezekiel—to that sprinkling which is for cleansing from defilement with the dead, and speaks of a more terrible defilement of the people, and of God's provision for it in a sacrifice whose virtue, as already said, still abides for them. It is like that other remarkable ordinance for the day of atonement, when the sins of the people are carried away by the scape-goat, which does not

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause also the [h]cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be builded. And the land that was desolate shall be [i]tilled, whereas it was a desolation in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become [j]like the garden of Eden; and the [k]waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited. And the [l]nations that shall be left round about you shall know that I Jehovah build the ruined places and plant that which was desolate: I Jehovah have [m]spoken it, and will do it.

[h] Zech. 8 7, 8. *cf.* Is. 40. 9.
[i] *cf.* Deut. 29. 24 with Jer. 32. 42-44. *cf.* Is. 35. 1, 2.
[j] Is. 51. 3. *ctr.* Joel 2 3.
[k] *ctr.* Is. 29. 1 6 with Ps. 48. 2, 12-14.
[l] *cf.* ch. 17. 24. *cf.* ch. 34. 28-30. ch. 37. 28. ch. 39. 23, etc.
[m] *cf.* Nu. 23. 19. *cf.* 2 Chr. 6. 4.

make atonement for them, but which is identified with an atonement already made. (See Leviticus xvi., *Notes.*) The priest has carried in the blood of the offering for them—the blood of the first goat; but no answer as to it comes forth for them while the priest is himself hidden in the sanctuary into which he is entered. When he comes out again, the scapegoat (identified with the first goat in the work which has been accomplished before, and which is not repeated) carries away the iniquities of the nation to a land cut off. Thus, in fact, Israel will be met by the power and virtue of an atonement made before our Great High Priest passed into heaven. There He remains, and so long as He remains there hidden from them, Israel have practically no atonement for them nationally. Their sins are not put away.

How perfectly this is in keeping with the sprinkling of water in which are the ashes of a sacrifice before offered—the memorial of a before-accomplished work. It is then only that this word is carried out: "From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." They abide as yet under the condemnation of their sins, as it is plain that nationally a new heart and a new spirit, which are the accompaniment of this, have never yet become theirs. Had it been so, that which follows immediately here would have taken place, and a fulness of blessing would be theirs, in which their whole condition would bear witness to the reality of what God is yet to do for them. It is not mere reformation; it is no work such as man can perform. If David witnesses that God must create in him a clean heart, so the promise here declares: "I will give you a new heart." It is the new heart that He will give which can alone alter their condition, a new heart which is itself the effect of a new spirit put within them.

The words at once remind us of the Lord's declaration to Nicodemus, that the Israelite also needed to be born again in order to inherit the kingdom of God. Water and Spirit the Lord puts together in these words: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" "born of the Spirit" implies, therefore, a new spirit in the person so born —a new and divine nature from the Almighty Worker of every true work that has ever been done in man. (See John iii., *Notes.*)

For this, the heart of stone must be taken out of the flesh, that a heart of flesh —a true feeling and tender heart—may be theirs. To this is added the blessed assurance: "I will put my Spirit within you," and thus, as the glory rests upon Jerusalem itself in the days that we are so shortly to contemplate, there is to be for all His saved among the people a personal assurance of this glorious reality. "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments and do them." Then follows that for which only now they are fit, and are secure in it: "Ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will yet for [l]this be [m]inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will [n]increase them with men like a flock. As the [o]holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem at her appointed [p]feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall [q]know that I am Jehovah.

l *cf.* Jer. 29. 11-14.
m *cf.* Jer. 50. 4, 5.
n *cf.* Zech. 13 9.
o ver. 10, etc.
p ch. 34, 11, etc.
q *cf.* Deut. 16. 16, etc.; *cf.* Ps. 80. 1 with Is. 40. 11.
r ch. 37. 28, etc.

The increase of the land follows as a necessary consequence. Israel's portion is in the earth, and therefore nature itself is a witness to the relation in which they stand to God. It has been largely a witness against them, as we know. It is yet to bear testimony of another kind. Christians are taken out of the world, and are strangers and pilgrims in it: their portion is elsewhere. But, alas, with Christians also there can be a reproach of famine, which is the index of how they stand with God. How many have gone down to Egypt, as Abraham did of old, because of a famine in *their own* things! Our land is indeed "the glory of all lands;" but it is, above all things, a dependent land, and if we are not in communion with God we have less than any others; for the world is a wilderness for us, however much we may dream of plenty in it, while our own portion, though not denied us, surely, can yet be found only by those who *dwell* in it. The word is still for us, "Dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." It is not so much the knowledge of the evil we have brought upon ourselves that brings repentance, but, in its full character, it is the wonder of the Lord's grace that does so; as the apostle says, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance," so it will be when Israel shall have been brought back into their land by the mercy of God, and find His abundant welcome in the light of His glorious presence. They shall indeed remember their evil ways and their doings that were not good, and loathe themselves for their iniquities and abominations.

Meanwhile God is acting for Himself, as He declares here. He is in a measure doing in Israel what we shall know in a still brighter scene and in all its fulness, when God shall show "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." It is not only for their sakes or for our sakes that God takes up any, but He delights to make Himself known in all that He is —the depths of the riches of His wisdom as well as of His love. Thus He has a sure ground upon which to act, and we have an unchallengeable blessing, which never can be forfeited. If God is going to show "the exceeding riches of His grace," where can we limit that? What wondrous revelations are implied here! It is good, while we are thinking of all the prophet here sets before us, to realize that they are but the figures of the things which belong to us—not indeed in the sense in which so many would make them figures, as depriving Israel of their just title to them, for the apostle of the Gentiles has assured us that these Old Testament promises belong to his "kinsmen according to the flesh:" it seems idle, therefore, to discuss whether these promises do belong to Israel. The earth at that time will be, as it were, a reflection of the heavens that are opened over it. But we shall have to trace this more fully in our prophet when we reach the final chapters. There is no confusion between the earthly and the heavenly spheres of blessing, and there is no excuse for any making confusion. Correspondence there is indeed, and we shall find many a lesson in seeking to trace this.

God has not forgotten man and the earth, and He is not going to drop it out of sight and have done with it. It is the scene of His own Son's sufferings, and the earth itself has been purchased by Him. It shall therefore be redeemed, not done away. The millennial blessing itself is but a step to the full glory of it. It is its regeneration time, according to the Word elsewhere (Matt. xix. 28), the time when evil shall be put down and righteousness shall rule, but not yet

3 (xxxvii): The resurrection of the body.

1 (1-14): Life in the Spirit.

3. [1] The [s]hand of Jehovah was upon me, and Jehovah [t]carried me out in the Spirit, and set me down in the midst of a [u]valley; and it was full of [v]bones. And he caused me to [w]pass by them round about; and, behold, there were many in the open valley; and, behold, they were very [x]dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, [y]can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord Jehovah, [z]thou knowest. And he said unto me, [a]Prophesy over these bones, and say unto them, Ye [b]dry bones, [c]hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord unto these bones: Behold, I will cause [d]breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will put [e]sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall [f]know that I am Jehovah.

s ch. 1. 3, etc. t ch. 8. 3. ch. 11. 24. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 1-4. *cf.* Rev. 1. 10, etc. u *ctr.* ch. 17. 22-24. *cf.* Zech. 12. 11. *cf.* Zech. 14, 4, 5. v *cf.* Ps 141. 7, ver. 11. w *cf.* Neh. 2. 12-16. *cf.* Lk. 19. 41, etc. *ctr.* Ps. 48. 12-14. x *cf.* Ps. 32. 4. *cf.* Eph. 2. 1. y *cf.* Rom. 11. 15; *cf.* Jer. 30. 10-17. z *cf.* Jer. 32. 17, 27; *cf.* Rom. 4. 17. a *ctr.* 1 Ki. 13. 2; *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 20-22; *cf.* Lk. 3. 2, etc. b *cf.* Acts 17. 30. c *cf.* Is. 26. 19; *cf.* Is. 42. 18; *cf.* Jno. 5. 25. d *cf.* Gen. 2. 7; *cf.* 1 Pet. I. 23; *cf.* Jno. 1. 3-8. e vers. 8-10; *cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 14; *cf.* Jer. 30. 17. f ch. 36. 38, etc.

the time when it will be utterly banished. That there comes between this and the time of full blessing, the passing away of the heavens and earth to be replaced by new heavens and a new earth, has been misapprehended so as to make a great mistake in the way. The earth passes—is to be changed—just as the body passes from the corruptible to the incorruptible, from the state of dishonor which sin has caused, to the state of glory; but the identification of the risen man with the man who toiled and suffered and sinned upon earth is no less complete on this account. We speak of a "new man" when we do not mean *another* man in the strict sense of the word; so we speak of "a new earth" which will indeed be that, as every one shall realize, yet *not another* earth, but the earth made new—a realized fulfilment of God's thoughts with regard to the earth when He created it. We do not go on to that here. Save in a single expression, Old Testament prophecy is limited to the millennium as its outlook, and then that kingdom shall have begun in which, under the rule of Him who is the perfect Revealer of the mind of God, that which is eternal will be perfected. What we have here is, on the one side, the trial of man still, but, on the other, God is finally inviting (by the display of all this beauty and the manifestation of His truth and grace) men to enjoy it. Revelation assures us that even then, as there will be hearts obdurate to it all the way through, so there will be a final outbreak even under those glorious skies. It is the necessary manifestation of what has been kept down by power throughout the millennial reign, in order that judgment may make the clean work which it must finally do that perfect blessing may come in.

And what a witness to man will be that which we find here; and they shall say: "This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited!" There is no room for doubt or question any longer but that Jehovah has done this. There will be no skeptics or atheists in those days; yet, alas, the enmity of man's heart will not be removed even by that wondrous vision. "The nations that shall be left round about you shall know that I Jehovah build the ruined places, and plant that which was desolate. I Jehovah have spoken it, and will do it."

That which follows immediately is not necessarily a condition that God will "yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them;" but, rather, the assurance that they *will*. It does not involve, as some seem to imagine, that the actual unbelief of the nation at the present time has set aside such promises as these which have been given them. The Lord goes on imme-

And I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, a rustling, and the bones [g]came together, bone to its bone. And I beheld, and, lo, sinews and flesh came up upon them, and [h]skin covered them above; but there was [i]no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the [j]wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. And I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath [k]came into them, and they lived, and [l]stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great [m]army.

g cf. Jer 50.4 *cf.* Ezra 2.1. *h cf.* Neh. 10. 29. *i cf.* Mt. 23. 13-28. *j* vers. 5, 14. *cf.* Jno. 3. 8. *cf.* Acts 2 2. *k cf.* Ps. 104. 30. *cf.* Rev. 11. 11. *cf.* Prov. 1. 23. *l cf.* Lk. 7. 14, 15. *cf.* Jno. 11. 43, 44. *cf.* Is. 51. 17. *cf.* Is. 52.1,2. *m cf.* Is. 60. 8, 9; *cf.* Ps. 149. 6-9.

diately with His assurances, which certainly do not rest upon any foundation less broad than that upon which He has set them. God is acting for the glory of His name, and who shall disappoint Him? "I will increase them with men," He says, "like a flock, as the holy flock; as the flock of Jerusalem at her appointed times; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men, and they shall know that I am Jehovah."

3. We have still to see this restoration of Israel stamped as a resurrection; God bringing them out of a condition in which even to themselves all hope is lost. They are but as the dry bones of the slain, of which, if the question be raised, "Can these bones live?" the answer can only be in God's hands. The new life of the nation is truly a resurrection. The stamp which God is putting upon all things here is to be put distinctly upon this people yet. It will not be by their own efforts or achievements—as they are thinking and planning now—that they will become all that the prophets have declared that they shall become. Nothing but the quickening breath of God can accomplish it for them, and for this they have yet to be brought down into the dust, even after all that they have suffered for these centuries, in order that they may learn their needed lesson of abasement and may learn the grace to which, as they shall finally own, they owe everything.

[1] We have two parts in this chapter: First, new life in the Spirit is given to the nation which thus becomes miraculously reorganized; while, in the second part we have what must be in order for this, the healing of the long breach between Judah and Ephraim, so that the nation as a whole shall re-attain its unity and under the true David, from whom, alas, they have alike gone astray. "The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and Jehovah carried me out in the Spirit, and set me down in the midst of a valley, and it was full of bones; and He caused me to pass by them round about, and behold, there were very many on the face of the valley, and behold, they were very dry." There is no mingling here of the dead and the living as the prophet sees them. They are altogether those from whom not merely life is departed, but who are the mere dry and scattered relics of the dead. The prophet is challenged by the question: "Son of man, can these bones live?" To man of course this is impossible. The passage from death to life has never been achieved, save by the power of God alone; and this, spite of all their present thoughts, is the condition out of which God at last revives them. It is not the actual condition of the nation at present in which, as we know, there are yet those who live—live spiritually. "Blindness *in part* is happened unto Israel." It is true that these are, in the mind of God, no more part of the people according to the flesh; they have lost their Jewish hopes, to find in the loving mercy of God far better ones. When the Lord shall have removed His present people to Himself, the Church, this

And he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole [n]house of Israel. Behold, they say, Our [o]bones are dried up, and our hope is lost: we are [p]cut off. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will open your [q]graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people, and bring you into the [r]land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. And I will put my [s]Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall [t]know that I Jehovah have spoken it, and have done it, saith Jehovah.

n vers. 16,19 *cf.* Is. 11. 12, 13.
o *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 31, 32. *cf.* Nu. 17. 6, 12, 13. *cf.* Ps. 77. 7, 9 *cf.* Is. 49. 14. *cf.* Lam. 2. 21, 22 *cf.* Lam. 3. 4
p *cf.* Hos. 1. 6, 9. *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 14, 21.
q Hos. 13. 14. Dan. 12. 2.
r ch. 25. 3.
s ch. 36. 27. *cf.* ch. 11. 19. ch. 18. 31.
t ch. 36. 36, 38; ch. 37. 6; ch. 5. 13, 17, etc.

state of things will be ended. The nation will be then, in their rejection of Christ, utterly dead. The prophet answers: "O Lord Jehovah, Thou knowest," and then he is bidden to give Jehovah's word to the dry bones themselves. The nation is to be thus new born by the word of God, and from the dead. Every step here is a true creative work of God: "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and I will put sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live." And then comes once more the refrain,—for this alone is what can make it truly life: "Ye shall know that I am Jehovah."

So the prophet prophesies and sees the miracle wrought—the wondrous miracle of resurrection. He sees the bones come together, and the flesh cover them, and the form given, while yet there is no breath from on high. But then he is told to prophesy to the winds, the type, as we know, in the Lord's words, of the Spirit; and from the four winds, the breath comes into these slain, and now they live. These that, but a moment since, were mere inanimate and scattered wrecks of departed life, are now at once an exceeding great army, the hosts of the Lord.

The prophet is not left in doubt about the vision. The bones are the whole of the house of Israel, and in a condition in which they are made to realize at last that, as to themselves, there is no hope any longer. They are not only dead, as the prophet has seen them, but in their graves, buried and gone. But this is the stamp which God puts upon everything in nature. The evening dies into the night before the morning springs out of it. The earth itself will have to find its dissolution before it comes to that new earth in which dwelleth righteousness. Ezekiel's wheel is going round; it is ordained to abase all the glory of man in order that man may come at last to true glory. In resurrection alone can everything be stable, as that which manifests the power of evil already met and conquered, and no foe to meet again. God has done it all Himself; He has taken upon Himself the whole burden of it! How strange a work He has wrought in order that He might lift creation into the glory that yet shall be, every Christian knows. And Israel shall know who it is that has done this, that He is indeed Jehovah, when He has opened their graves and caused them to come up out of their graves and put His Spirit in them that they may live. The blessing still keeps to the old sphere of promise for them; as an earthly people the earth is their destiny. "I will bless you," says the Lord, "*in your own land.*" Then shall prophecy find its full witness and have the eternal seal upon it: "Ye shall know that I Jehovah have spoken it, and have done it, saith Jehovah."

2 (15-28): The restoration of the brotherhood of Judah and Ephraim.

2 And the [u] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, And thou, son of man, take thee one [v] stick, and write upon it, For [w] Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions. And take another stick, and write upon it, For [x] Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel his companions. And [y] join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thy hand. And when the children of thy people speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not [z] declare to us what thou meanest by these? say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions, and will put them with this. [even] with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be [a] one in my hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thy hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [b] take the children of Israel from among the nations whither they are gone, and will [c] gather them from every side, and bring them into

[u] ch. 35. 1, etc.
[v] *ctr.* Num. 17. 6 13.
[w] 1 Chron. 5. 2. Gen. 49. 8 12.
[x] 1 Chron. 5. 1. Gen. 49. 22-26.
[y] vers. 22-24.
[z] ch. 24. 19.
[a] Mic. 4. 6, 7; 5. 3. Zeph. 3. 14-20.
[b] ch. 36. 24. ch 28. 25. Is. 11. 11, 12.
[c] ch. 36. 24. ch. 34. 13. ch. 20. 34.

2 One thing remains which must not be omitted. The ancient and unnatural strife between Judah and Ephraim must and will surely pass away if all this is to be; and the complete assurance of it is given: "The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, And thou, son of man, take thee one stick and write upon it: For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions. Then take another stick, and write upon it: For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions; and join them one to another into one stick, and they shall become one in thy hand."

The people are Jews, for us now; that is, they are all of Judah; and the question has even been asked whether such coming together did not find its accomplishment long ago, when the people returned out of captivity in Babylon. Thus we are told with regard to the prophetess Anna, in our Lord's day, that she was of the tribe of Asher; and it is thought that other intimations are given that the ten tribes, so often spoken of as "the lost tribes," have become merged long since into this one Jewish race. But this will not do for the prophecy here, and assuredly it will not do for God. It is distinctly in their own land, and under the King whom God will raise up to them, when God shall be once more manifestly their God, His sanctuary set in the midst of them forever, that this prophecy shall find its accomplishment. There is a universal gathering: "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be king to them all, and they shall be no more two nations; neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." That the time of all this is future should need no argument, nor should it need one that the promise to which God has appended no condition here (but which He affirms He will Himself fulfil) can never be set aside by any unfaithfulness of the people of whom He speaks, a people whose unfaithfulness has been all contemplated (and realized) from the beginning. Faithless as they may be, the time will come, as God has announced it, when they shall no more defile themselves with their idols nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions, but He will save them out of their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and they shall be His people and He will be their God.

their own land; and I will make them [d]one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and [e]one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be [f]no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they [g]defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will [h]save them out of all their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: and they shall be [i]my people, and I will be their God. And my servant [j]David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: and they shall [k]walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the [l]land that I have given to [m]Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they and their children, and their children's children forever: and [n]David my servant shall be their prince forever. And I will make a [o]covenant of peace with them: it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place* them, and [p]multiply them, and will set my [q]sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My [r]tabernacle also shall be over them; and I will be their [s]God, and they shall be my people. And the [t]nations shall know that I am Jehovah that sanctify Israel when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever.

d Jer. 3. 18; 30. 3. Isa. 11. 13. Hos 1. 11.
e ch. 34. 23. Jer. 30. 21; 23. 1-8.
f ch. 48.
g ch. 36.26.29. ch. 39. 7. ch. 43. 7. ch. 14. 11. Hos. 14. 4-9. Jer. 3. 17.
h ch. 36. 28. ch. 28. 25. ch. 20 41. Mic.7.18-20. Jer. 50. 20.
i ch. 36. 28.
j ch. 34. 24.
k ch. 36. 27.
l ch. 36. 28. ch. 28 25.
m ch. 28. 25. Gen. 35. 12.
n *cf.* Amos 9. 11.
o ch. 34. 25.
p ch. 36. 10.
q ch. 43. 7. ch. 48. 8, 10, 21.
r *cf.* Is. 33. 20-22. Is. 4. 5, 6.
s Hos. 1. 10. ch. 11. 20; ch. 14. 11.
t ch. 36. 23.

* Lit., "give."

The former shepherd-king comes again before us here, David, "the Beloved." This keeper of sheep has celebrated in his psalms, as we well know, Jehovah Himself in this character, and realized wondrous things from it: "Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want." This is God's thought of rule, as Christ, the true Shepherd, fully manifests it; so that even if He take the rod of iron, as He will do in the time near to come, it will be to "tend" or *shepherd* the nations with it. Here is one with whom rule is *ministry*, and subjection to Him is subjection to eternal love itself. Thus when God at last shall be able to show all that is in His heart, in the times contemplated here, how shall it in fact be shown? When they shall dwell in the land as their unalienable inheritance, they and their children and their children's children forever; and David, "the Beloved," himself the servant of Jehovah, shall be their prince forever. The One who *claims* obedience shall be the One who has *walked* in obedience, and that at all cost to Himself, and in devotedness to all the interests of His people.

Thus the "covenant of peace" shall be made with them—"He has made peace by the blood of His cross." Thus it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and "I will bless them," says the Lord, "and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore." This last remains for full expansion by the mouth of Ezekiel himself, but divine love lingers upon it: "My tabernacle also shall be over them"—those covering wings which once they refused, but of which they shall yet know the blessedness—"and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah that sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

SUBDIVISION 2. (chaps. xxxviii., xxxix.)

Salvation fully realized through Jehovah's judgment of Israel's last enemy

Section 1. (chap. xxxviii. 1-7.)

The leaders in this final conflict.

And the [u]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against [v]Gog, the land of [w]Magog, the prince of Rosh, [x]Meshech, and [y]Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. And I will turn thee back, and put [z]hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses, and horsemen, all of them thoroughly equipped, a great assemblage with targets and shields, all of them handling

u ch. 37. 15.
v Rev. 20. 8.
w Gen. 10. 2. 1 Chr. 1. 5.
x Gen 10. 2. 1 Chron. 1. 5, 17. Ps. 120. 5. ch 27. 13; ch. 32. 26.
y Gen. 10. 2. 1 Chr. 1. 5, Is. 66. 19. ch. 27. 13. ch. 32. 26.
z cf. 2 Ki. 19. 28. *cf.* ch. 29. 4.

SUBDIVISION 2.

Israel is now brought finally back from her long captivity and planted in the land, no more to be removed, the face of the Lord never again to be turned from her. This being accomplished, there remains only the condition of the world outside to be dealt with, and to show the effect of these judgments in the deliverance of the earth.

There are three spheres of judgment in Ezekiel, apart altogether from the sphere of professing Christianity, which, of course, is not seen in Ezekiel.

First of all comes the judgment of the Gentiles who have been brought in contact with the light, and who are judged, therefore, with regard to their responsibility as to this. We shall constantly find that they are judged by their attitude towards Israel, and that the judgment does not go, therefore, beyond the circle of those who have been brought in contact with Israel. This we have seen already.

The judgments in Ezekiel are earthly judgments, and by the hands of the Gentiles themselves—in short, of Nebuchadnezzar, in whose hands God had put the imperial power. The Gentiles, who never had any revelation, are entrusted with this power. Therefore, they are directed at least to the true God and to His message, as we find in Daniel, God Himself dealing expressly with the man to whom He had entrusted this power. This ends speedily in the discovery that he is but like all those who have been entrusted with such responsibility, as we see in the image of gold set up in the Plain of Dura, and where those who confess the true God have to suffer for their faithfulness. What follows is the history of increasing departure; the history of Nebuchadnezzar himself and of his successors being taken as the exemplification of it. With the Lord's personal coming the story of the empires ends. But this is not the end altogether of Gentile history. Morally, man is completely judged, but the full assurance of this condition is seen in what follows—"the times of the Gentiles."

swords: [a]Persia, [b]Cush,* and [c]Phut† with them, all of them with shield and helmet; [d]Gomer,‡ and all his bands; the house of [e]Togarmah from the farthest north, and all his bands; — many peoples with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thine assemblage that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard§ unto them.

a ch. 27. 10. *cf.* Dan. 2. 32. 39; 5. 28-31; 8. 20.
b *cf.* Gen. 2. 13; 10. 6-8. Jer. 46. 9. Zeph. 2. 12. Dan. 11. 43. ch. 30. 4, 5, 9.
c *cf.* Gen. 10. 6. 1 Chr. 1. 8. ch. 27. 10.; 30. 5. Jer. 46. 9. Dan. 11. 43. Nah. 3. 9.
d *cf.* Gen. 10. 2, 3. 1 Chr. 1. 5, 6.
e *cf.* Gen. 10. 3. 1 Chr. 1. 6. ch. 27. 14.

* Cush was the son of Ham, and the father of Nimrod. Cush, or Ethiopia, has reference in general to a powerful kingdom to the south of Egypt, while the connection with Nimrod associates the family with the first kingdom in Babylonia.—(J. B.).

† The A. V. gives Libya, the Greek name for the region along the Mediterranean, west of Egypt. The Hebrew name is Phut.—(J.B.)

‡ Gomer was the eldest son of Japheth, and father of Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. He is the supposed progenitor of certain branches of the Celtic family. His descendants settled to the north of the Black Sea, spreading to the South and West of Europe.—(J.B.)

§ "Or, "chief," "commander."

This is what we have in the chapters now before us, in which the last manifestation of the Gentiles is given. If we look carefully at the names of the peoples here mentioned, we see at once that we are in a different sphere from that of Daniel. We return to what we find at the very beginning: Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer and such like, which carries us right back to Gen. 10; it sets before us the final history of those who, we may say, had as yet no history at all. It is evident that the sons of Japheth are here before us, and that Japheth is seen as the prodigal that has wandered away from God; and having lost God, he has lost himself no less.

If we look at the genealogies in Gen. 10, we shall see how brief and fragmentary they are. As with the sons of Gomer, those of the next generations are only put before us in a broken manner, and they soon end altogether; nor have we any revival of them until we come to Ezekiel. With the exception of Persia in a partial way, we have nothing of the Gentiles numbered among the imperial powers of Daniel; for, as already said, the imperial history ignores these.

The first name here, a strange one in Scripture, we may recognize in another form. It is said that Gog means "extension;" Magog is but the same with the additional thought, perhaps, of "means," or "place of," "extension." Japheth is "enlargement." Thus Japheth and Gog give us thoughts to some extent similar.

[*End of "Notes" by Mr. Grant.*]

Now Ezekiel clearly shows how in the coming days of peace and prosperity, following the gracious work of restoration recorded in the preceding chapters, Jehovah will bring up against His people and their land these great and powerful nations which are situated outside the limits of the empires of which Daniel speaks. *They* have been already met in the full assemblage of their power at Har-Magedon (Rev. xvi. 12-16; xix. 11-21), followed by the judgment, at the Lord's appearing on Mount Olivet (Zech. xiv. 1-4), of the great host gathered

Section 2. (chap. xxxviii. 8-13.)

The evil designs of the enemy

After many days shalt thou be visited; at the end of years|| thou shalt come into the land brought back from the [f]sword, [g]gathered out of many peoples, upon the [h]mountains of Israel which

f *cf.* Is. 1. 20, Hos. 11. 6.
g ver. 12. *cf.* 20.34,etc. 28. 25, etc. 36. 24, etc. 37. 21. Is. 11. 12; 54. 7; 56. 8. Jer. 23. 3; 29. 14. Zeph. 3. 19, 20.
h *cf.* ch. 36. 1-15. ch. 37. 22.

|| This expression would seem to have the same meaning as another of very distinct prophetic connection, i. e., "the last," or "latter (end of, New Trans.) days," which occurs just 14 times (Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Deut. 4:30; 31:29; Isa. 2:2; Jer. 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ezek 38:16; Dan. 2:28; 10:14; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 4:1), in all of which the reference is clearly to the closing scenes of Jacob's time of trouble and the establishment of the Millennial kingdom, as a study of the context of these passages will show.—(J. B.)

for the capture of Jerusalem. But Gog and his hosts are brought up *after* these scenes of judgment, and when Israel is dwelling safely (vers. 8-11), for the purpose of manifesting before all nations the absolute supremacy of Jehovah in all the earth. The object in view is emphatically stated (xxxviii. 16, 23; xxxix. 6, 7, 21, 22, 28).

This prophecy not only warns, and so prepares, the people for this last great invasion, but it is intended to give them confidence, since it makes known that Jehovah will act on their behalf—He who has so blessedly established them in the land under the True Shepherd. Further they will not need to fight; Jehovah shall rise in His fury; He shall fight and triumph gloriously, and Gog shall find not a *spoil,* but a *grave* in Israel's fair land, which shall be a perpetual memorial, a witness to Jehovah's great power in judgment upon this insolent enemy.

After this great show of the enemy's arrogance, his destruction, and the purging of the land from the defilement of their corpses, we have in beautiful sequence the dwelling place of God with the detail of its establishment, the Sanctuary of the land and people, the divine centre of the earth, for "The Lord is there."

Thus, in the order of these events, we see the linking together of important features which often appear in the ways of God. First, the people are gathered back and established in favor; secondly, the enmity and power of the enemy is permitted under God's hand to manifest itself, resulting in God being glorified, while full deliverance becomes the portion of His people. Thenceforth "none shall make them afraid" any more, God in glory dwelling in their midst.

These things are illustrated on two other prominent occasions. In Egypt during the plagues, and at the Passover, the people are manifested as having special favor in the eyes of Jehovah; they are marked off from those under judgment, though in exile and poor slaves under Egypt's power; these conditions find a certain correspondence in the days of which Ezekiel speaks, in that a people scattered and peeled, trodden down under Gentile oppression, is delivered and brought into blessing in their God-given land. And as Pharaoh and all his hosts came against the delivered people, only to meet his utter destruction, so shall it be with Gog and his company; and as the Tabernacle, God's dwelling, was set up among the people, so here,

have been a perpetual [i]waste: but it is brought forth out of the peoples, and they shall all of them be dwelling in [j]safety. And thou shalt ascend, thou shalt come like a [k]storm, thou shalt be like a [l]cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many peoples with thee.

i cf. ch. 5. 14. ch. 6. 14. Jer. 2. 15. *ctr.* Is. 60. 18; 61. 4. Amos 9. 14, 15.
j cf. ch. 28. 24 26. Jer. 32. 37. ch. 34. 27,28. Hos. 2. 18.
k ctr. Is. 4. 6; 25. 4. *l ctr.* Is. 4. 5; 25. 4, 5; ch 30. 3; 34. 12; Jer. 4. 13.

as already remarked, the Sanctuary of the Millennial glory is established. The other occasion is in David's time. The nation, delivered out of the abject condition which existed in the closing period of the Judges, is established in blessing under David's rule with the subjugation of enemies, followed by the peaceful reign of Solomon and the building of the Temple.

We may translate these things into our individual experience. Redemption not only places us before God in favor, but also where we become special objects of the enemy's attack in full power (Eph. 6). For this the panoply of God is provided, invested in which, victory is assured. This leads into the possession of our spiritual blessings in heavenly places, into what spiritually answers to the sanctuary for us.

The truth in the Epistle to the Romans may be considered in a similar setting. First, our salvation out of ruin through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Then we get the questions as to sin, the flesh, and the law, by means of which the enemy assails the saved soul, yet permitted by God for its exercise and blessing. God delivers by the Word of Truth, and this introduces to the glorious things of Romans 8—a sanctuary chapter. Other analogies of this divine order may be traced in Scripture. To thus see the ways of God is not only instructive, but comforting and assuring to the heart. How certain it is that He makes all things work together for good to His people. The enemy can do nothing but what shall abound to His praise and our blessing.

Let us now consider this important prophecy in more detail.

Sec. 1.

1. The leaders in the conflict soon to ensue are first set before us. It is the Lord Jehovah as against Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. For faith this must at once settle the issue. "Who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry?" Who?—for it is the hour when the earth must fear and be still, God having arisen in judgment "to save all the meek of the earth" (Ps. lxxvi.).

Gog is evidently a ruler of great power and influence, for he is able to gather under his leadership a complex group of nations, on behalf of whom Jehovah commands him to prepare in view of the coming conflict, and to whom he is to be a "guard" or "commander." This marks him as a military organizer and leader. Here we have simply the statement of his great assemblage. The time at which it takes place and the object, are given later in the chapter.

These nations do not fill a large place in prophecy. Persia alone has any measure of prominence. They are not immediately adjacent to the land, nor do they belong to the western confederacy. They

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: It shall even come to pass in that day that things shall come into thy mind, and thou shalt conceive an evil purpose; and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will come to them that are at rest, that dwell in [m]safety, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to seize a [n]spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thy hand against the [o]waste places that are [now]

m ver. 8.
n ctr. Is. 17. 12-14.
o ver. 8.

are the Gentile nations external to the groups mentioned in Daniel and Revelation, and largely descendants of Japheth, from whom come the inhabitants of "the isles of the sea" (Gen. x. 5). In a general way these peoples have been located near to and north of the Black Sea, Rosh pointing to Russia. It seems clear that we have in this assemblage a great northern confederacy which becomes the last instrument in Satan's hand by which he will seek the destruction of the chosen people then restored to the land under Messiah.

We must also distinguish this company and this invasion (which takes place early in the Millennium) from that which comes after the 1000 years of Messiah's reign, though Gog and Magog are again introduced (see notes on Rev. xx. 7-9).

Sec. 2.

Let us now endeavor to place this invasion in relation to the closing events of Daniel's 70th week. In this connection first note the words, "I will turn thee back" (xxxviii. 4; xxxix. 2). The force of this expression is to cause to return as to a place previously occupied. This being said of the invasion of the land at the time of which this vision treats seems to suggest that Jehovah is bringing these nations back again to a place formerly visited. In view of this the inquiry may be raised as to whether they had previously invaded Israel's land.

Bearing in mind that it is a northern confederacy of which Ezekiel speaks, certain nations of which are also associated in the assault upon the land recorded in Daniel xi., let us turn briefly to that prophecy. In vers. 36-39 we have the future Wilful King reigning in the land, with whom the Roman Prince makes a covenant for seven years (Dan. ix. 27), but which is broken in half that time; these rulers (the Beasts of Rev. 13) then manifest their full blasphemous character, setting up the abomination of desolation because of which God brings in a desolator — the overflowing scourge of Isa. xxviii. 15-19, the details of which are given in Dan. xi. 40-45. In the closing days of the seventieth week when the fearful apostasy of the Jewish nation under Antichrist supported by the Roman Prince is at its height, and the hour of judgment having drawn near, God in His providential ways acts to bring about the gathering of all the forces of the nations to meet their overthrow when the Lord appears in glory. So at this time the King of the South finds some reason to attack the Wilful King. Jealous perhaps of his great increase in power and influence as the chief associate of the Roman Prince, he determines upon an effort to lower his prestige. Seeing this the

inhabited, and against a people [p]gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the middle* of the land. [q]Sheba, and [r]Dedan, and the merchants of [s]Tarshish, with all the [t]young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thine assemblage to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take cattle and goods, to seize a great spoil?

* Or, "high part," lit., "navel," of the earth. The thought may be similar to that of Is. 2: 2.

p ver. 8.
q cf. ch. 27. 22, 23.
r ch 25. 13. 27 15, 20; Is. 21. 13.
s cf. ch. 27. 12, 25, etc. 2 Chr. 9. 21; 20. 36, 37. Ps. 72. 10. Is. 66. 19.
t cf. chs. 19. 2-6; 32. 2. Nah. 2. 11-13. cfr. Mic. 5. 8. Nu. 23. 24. Is. 11. 6.

King of the North is roused to action, for he too aspires to world-supremacy, and doubtless has watched with jealous eye the ascendancy of the king in Palestine who stands as the representative of the great western confederacy; now fearing that the King of the South may gain an advantage he rushes into action with the vast forces at his command. It is his movements which Daniel details at length. It is evident that he passes through Palestine and reaches as far as Egypt, the country of the King of the South, in the course of his victorious campaign. It is stated that the Libyans, or people of Phut, and the Ethiopians, or those of Cush, are in his forces, and these are also allies of Gog. Then tidings out of the east and north trouble him. Since he would be in the vicinity of Egypt at this time, it would appear that these tidings would come from Palestine, which would be to his east and north. They stir him to furious energy in a mighty effort to destroy an enemy of whom these tidings inform him. He returns and establishes himself with his armies "between the seas, at the glorious holy mountain," that is, between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. Joel and Zechariah describe this gathering, adding details not given by Daniel. (Compare Joel iii. and Zech. xiv.).

This gathering of armies to besige Jerusalem cannot be those of the western or revived Roman empire to which Rev. xix refers, for that power is allied to and would support the Wilful King against whom the King of the North comes in his whirlwind campaign. The nations then of which Zechariah and Joel speak are those to the north and east of the "pleasant land." They are the enemies of the Wilful King and the Western confederacy which supports him—the false Messiah in the Land. Keeping this in mind, and remembering that God is working at this time to bring all these forces together for judgment at the Lord's appearing, a thought suggests itself as to what tidings reached the King of the North when in the vicinity of Egypt. May they not be the news of the gathering hosts of the Western powers coming into Palestine to effect the cutting off of his return to the north, thus severing his communications from the rear, purposing then to strike one final blow which will decide the question of world-supremacy once for all in favor of the Beasts of Rev. xiii. which are the instruments of Satanic power and policy? Putting together with this the prophecy of Rev. xvi. we learn that this mighty host will gather at Har-Magedon, identified as the plain of Esdraelon, which lies across the path of travel through Palestine between the

Section 3 (chap. xxxviii. 14-23.)

The revelation of Jehovah to the nations in the judgment of Gog.

Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In [u]that day when my people Israel dwelleth in [v]safety, shalt thou not know [it]? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the farthest [w]north, thou and many peoples with thee, all of them riding upon [x]horses, a great assemblage, and a mighty army. And thou shalt come up against my people Israel as a [y]cloud to cover the land—it shall be at the †end

† See note, ver. 8.

x ver. 4; *ctr.* Hos. 1. 7; *cf.* Is. 31. 1, 3; Joel 1. 6; Hab. 1. 8; ch. 23. 6; 26. 7, 10. *y* ver. 9.

u cf. Is. 10. 20, 27; 12. 1-4; 26. 1; 27. 1; 52. 6. Jer. 30. 7-9. Ezek. 29. 21. Ho. 2. 18, 21. Jo. 3. 18. Amos 9. 11. Mic. 4. 6. Zech. 2 10-13; 3. 10; 9. 16; 12. 6 14; 14. 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21.

v ver. 8.

w ver. 6. ch. 39. 2. Jer. 1. 14; 6. 22; 46. 20, 24. Is. 14. 31.

north and the south.* Tidings of such movements may well explain Dan. xi. 44, and the northern leader commences his return, likewise determined to strike the blow which will place in his hand the coveted world-supremacy.

These opposing leaders know nothing of Him whom they will suddenly meet and whose appearing will with swift blows of judgment destroy them utterly (Isa. xxx. 27-33; xxxi. 8, 9; Zech. xiv. 3-5; 2 Thess. ii. 8; Rev. xix. 11-21).

Having digressed thus far it may not be amiss to go a little farther afield and consider more fully the order and relation of these events.

There are two general lines of prophecy as regards the nations which perhaps are not always distinguished. The Old Testament Prophets, except Daniel, very largely, if not entirely, treat of the course and judgment of the "peoples," or nations, north and east of the land, and which have come into direct relation to Israel, but which are always her pronounced enemies and oppressors. It is the Assyrian, the King of the North, and his allied peoples which are brought before us. The great western coalition, or revived Roman

* At the seaward end of this notable plain is situated the Bay of Acre, the line of which stretches from Haifa to Acre, or Acco. Perhaps it is of more than passing interest to note that the American Zion Commonwealth has purchased 15,000 acres of land right along the shore and back, covering a very fertile section; and that the Commonwealth is undertaking a great development of this vast sea frontage, making a new channel to the sea for the River Kishon, and preparing to establish important industries with garden cities lying back from the sea, around what will be soon the greatest port of the Mediterranean, as a high British official has declared. The Palestinian Government is to spend millions to make a genuine harbor at Haifa. It is just such extensive developments which would be needful for the assembling of the vast forces of the Roman empire upon this great plain, for it is natural to suppose that they will be gathered from many parts of the ten-kingdom confederacy, and transported under naval convoy to the shores of Palestine. Already 500 miles of railroad connect this bay and its harbor facilities with different parts of the Land, including Jerusalem and reaching as far south as Beer-sheba. At Haifa, where at the close of the world-war there were only 3,000 inhabitants, ten years after there were 13,000. For centuries this town has been at a standstill, but now it pulsates with life, and under the urge of industrial enterprise the mountains are being cut through and the sea front developed to meet the demands of the projects in view.

of days—and I will bring thee against [z]my land, that the nations may [a]know me, when I shall be [b]hallowed in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Art thou not he of whom I have [c]spoken in old time through my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days, for [many] years, that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass in that day, when Gog shall come against the land

[z] Deut. 32. 43. Ps. 10. 16; 85. 1 3. Is. 14. 2, 25. Jer. 2. 7. Hos. 9. 3. Joel 1. 6. Zech. 9. 16.
[a] ver. 23. chs. 37. 28; 39. 6, 7. Ps. 83. 12-18; 9. 16.
[b] ver. 23. *cf.* Is. 5. 16.

chs. 28. 22, 25; 36. 23; 39. 27; Deut. 32 51 with Nu. 27. 14. [c] See notes for reference passages.

empire, is not directly spoken of except in Daniel who, indeed, reveals the relation of both these confederacies.

Now in the New Testament what comes into view is the western empire, and not those nations which so largely fill the Old Testament vision. The moral reason for this seems evident. In the Old Testament God's controversy is with "the heathen" or "peoples" north and east of the land, also to the south, which had come into direct touch with Israel, and from whom she had learned her evil ways, all of whom however hated her bitterly, despising Jehovah, and helping forward her affliction on every possible occasion, for they desired to crush her out of existence. It is their still future attack upon the Land, and their siege of Jerusalem, with their overwhelming judgment at the hands of the Lord when He comes, which so largely occupies the Old Testament. In the New Testament it is the western coalition which fills the prophetic vision, because it is in direct relation to the Church and Christendom (which is the subject of the New Testament as Israel and her place is of the Old Testament), which it first persecuted, then favored. Finally becoming apostate we find these western powers associated with the Antichrist or false Jewish Messiah. The King of the North and his allies are the open enemies of this Wilful King who will then exercise authority in Palestine.

Thus we see there are two great divisions of the nations, and similarly there are two great gatherings, at the time of the end. One distinctively occupies the Old Testament vision, and the other the New. The former is the gathering of the peoples under Israel's oppressor, the Assyrian of the future, or last King of the North. The latter is the gathering of the western nations under the Beast and False Prophet at Har-Magedon.

As there are two gatherings, there are two distinct geographical locations at which they take place. In considering these two gatherings we must remember one marked feature of contrast: the one under the Beast is friendly to the apostate Jews and their city Jerusalem, their apostate leader being the ally of the Beast; the other is fiercely opposed to the Jews and their false prince, against whom they direct their attack. We can hardly think of the Beast and his hosts besieging Jerusalem; they would rather be its defenders, and so cannot be included among the "peoples" which come up against Jerusalem. The locations then are these: the King of the North and his hosts are gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which is just outside of Jerusalem at the base of Mt. Olivet. This is referred to in Joel iii. and Zech. xiv., and Dan. xi. 45. The other gathering, as already mentioned, is at Har-Magedon, quite to the north of Jeru-

of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah, [that] [d]my fury shall come up in my [e]face;* for in my [f]jealousy, in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Verily, in that day shall be a great [g]shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the heavens, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things which creep upon the earth, and all mankind that are upon the face of the earth shall shake at my [h]presence; and the [i]mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

* Lit., "nose." The idea seems to be that of a fiery breath from the nostrils, rather than the inflammation of the face from anger.—(J. B.).

d cf. ch. 5. 12-17; 14. 19-21; Is. 34. 1-4; 59. 17-19. 63. 1-6.
e cf. Is 10.20, 28, 33; 11. 4. 2 Thess. 2. 8. Rev. 2. 16; 19. 15, 21.
f cf. Zech. 8. 2. Joel 2.18-20.
g cf. Is. 2, 19, 21; 24. 18. Hag. 2. 6, 7.
h cf. Ps. 68. 2, 8; 97. 3-5; 114. 7. Is. 2. 10-20; 64. 1-3. Jer. 4. 26.
i Is. 64. 3. Nah. 1. 5, 6. Hab. 3. 6, 10.

salem, and identified with the plain of Esdraelon, connected with the sea coast where it would be natural for great armies to disembark.

As we may thus discern two distinct groups of nations, two distinct gatherings at two distinctly different centres, so we may, I think, speak of two distinct, though of course closely related, manifestations of the Lord in judgment. The appearing of the Lord in glory for judgment is described in a twofold way. Daniel saw Him come like a son of man with the clouds of heaven (vii. 13); John says, "Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him." And again, "I saw, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud one sitting like the Son of Man;" and, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and one sitting on it...and the armies which were in heaven followed Him." Then the Lord's own words are, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days...shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the land lament, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." He will come in the glory of His Father with His angels. Paul speaks of "the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of His power," at which time He will consume the Lawless One, the Antichrist, with the breath of His mouth and shall annul him by the appearing of His coming. It is then also that the first Beast is taken, and both these monsters of iniquity are cast into the lake of fire and their armies destroyed. These details give one aspect of the Lord's appearing apparently directly connected with the judgment of the apostate western powers under the Roman Prince, the first Beast of Rev. xiii, and his ally the second Beast, or the Antichrist of the Jews, the Lawless One of 2 Thess. ii. and the Wilful King of Dan. xi. 36-39. The other aspect of the Lord's appearing is described as an actual descent to the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv.; Acts i. 10, 11). With this we have the deliverance of besieged Jerusalem, against which the King of the North and his hosts are assembled in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, as with the other—the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, His coming in the clouds—we have the immediate judgment of the Beast and the False Prophet, or Antichrist, which stroke of judgment seems to take place *first* in the progress of the Lord's manifestation, after which He stands upon Olivet as Zechariah describes. It is to be noted that

And I will call for a [j]sword against him throughout all [k]my mountains, saith the Lord Jehovah: [l]every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will enter into judgment with him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many peoples that are with him, [m]overflowing rain and great [n]hailstones, fire and [o]brimstone. And I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will be [p]known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I [am] Jehovah.

j cf. Is.66.16.
k cf. Is 14. 25; 49. 11; 65. 9.
l Jud 7. 22. 1 Sam. 14. 20. 2 Chron. 20. 23. Hag. 2. 22 Zech. 14. 12, 13.
m ch. 13. 11.
n ch. 13. 11, 13. Is. 30. 30.
o Gen. 19. 24. Deu. 29. 23. Ps. 11. 6. Is. 30. 33; 34. 9. Luke 17. 29. Rev. 19. 20.
p cf. Ex. 7; 5, 17; 8. 10, 22; 9. 13-18; Rom. 9. 17, 22

the city is actually taken and plundered by the besieging armies, which naturally are not those of the Beast and his ally, the Jewish Antichrist, for they would be gathered rather for its defence, and it seems more than likely that they had been at Har-Magedon for that purpose in response to appeal from the Jewish ruler to meet and destroy their mutual enemy, the King of the North, when he returned from his drive into Egypt. It is evident that for some reason they could not reach Jerusalem in time to prevent its capture and plunder, though assembled only a few miles to the north. Why this failure and victory of the enemy? Is it to be explained by the fact that the Lord had suddenly appeared in heavenly glory and smitten them with the breath of His mouth, which is compared to a sharp two-edged sword, and so the city left to its own resources falls a prey to the superior power of the attacking forces? Is not just such a failure of the trusted power of the West foretold by Isaiah (xxviii. 14-22)? It would so appear. But is there a lapse of time allowed between this initial stroke and the actual appearing on Mount Olivet—during which opportunity is given for the King of the North to accomplish the capture of the city with its apostate mass? And may this not take up the additional thirty days of Dan. xii. 11 at the end of which the Lord appears for the deliverance of the city? In any case after this the Millennial kingdom is set up. There is still a further period of forty-five days after the close of the seventieth week mentioned in Daniel. May it not be that during this second additional period the momentous events of Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix. take place? I merely offer these thoughts by way of suggestion as presenting the possible order and relation of these vastly important events. As to the events themselves there need be no question. The prophetic Scriptures are clear enough.

We may conclude, then, that there was a first invasion of the land by the King of the North, and that this answers to what is foretold in such scriptures as Isa. xxviii. 14-22; Dan. ix. 27; xi. 40-45; Joel iii.; Zech. xiv. Furthermore, this leader is the personage of Dan. viii. 23-25, of whom the Little Horn of that chapter is the anticipatory fulfilment (Antioches Epiphanes, King of Syria, the north, in contrast to Egypt, the south), showing that it is the King of the North that is in view. Now the course of this leader is carried to the point of standing up against the Prince of princes—Messiah, who must there-

Section 4. (chap. xxxix. 1-7.)

Creature impotence: the overthrow of the proud foe.

And thou, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [q]Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; and I will turn thee back, and lead† thee, and will cause thee to come up

q ch. 38. 3.

† The meaning of this word is uncertain. Perhaps the A. V. is correct in rendering, "leave but the sixth part of thee." It is at least suggestive as intimating that six, the number which speaks of the manifestation of evil, and the divine limit to its activity, is the measure of Gog's host, i.e., six parts compose it, of which God spares one in divine sovereignty.—(J.B.).

fore have been manifested for this to take place. Considering that the powers in Dan. viii. and xi. are to be identified, as well as with the Gog confederacy which comes out of the north and bears both a national and territorial identity with the former, then in the invasion of which our chapters speak we get the *second* invasion of the Northern confederacy. This seems like a supreme effort to overcome the third great Combatant who so suddenly appeared on the scene at the time of their first attack, smiting the assembled armies in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and those of the West at Har-magedon. He does not know that Jehovah is turning him back to the mountains of Israel, and that in reality he is standing up against the Prince of princes, who is already present, as chap. xxxvii. shows. But as Daniel says, "He shall be broken without hand"—a terse description of what Ezekiel depicts in more detail.

One final suggestion: in Dan. viii. it is stated of this northern leader that he destroyed the mighty and the holy people, that is, the Jewish people; and that he shall stand up against Messiah. The first would certainly characterize his actions at the time of his first invasion, while the latter would be accomplished in what these chapters of Ezekiel tell us. This may have taken place very shortly after the Lord's descent to the Mount of Olives.

The time at which this invasion took place is clearly indicated (vers. 8, 11, 12). It is when the waste condition of the land is past, and the regathered people are dwelling securely in peace (Zech. xiv. 10, 11; Amos ix. 11-15; Isa. xxxv.; Jer. xxx. 3). His coming is like that of a dark thunder-cloud, spreading over the land, ascending from the north parts upon the mountains of Israel. In all this Jehovah is revealed as not only foreknowing and foretelling, but also as the Searcher of hearts. The mind of the enemy is as an open book to Him. This we learn in addition to the fact that *He* is putting hooks into the jaws of this mighty host, bringing them forth to meet Himself that all nations may know Him, the Holy One of Israel.

When the time of these events has come, how comforting and reassuring for the people to have this word of prophecy. On this they may rest their souls when the first signs of the gathering storm shall suddenly darken the blessed scenes of peace and plenty which will then be their portion in the land "brought back from the sword." Gog shall not be permitted to put it to the sword again. Has not

from the farthest north, and will bring thee upon [r]the mountains of Israel. And I will smite thy [s]bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall [t]upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the peoples that are with thee: I have given thee to be [u]food for the birds of prey of every wing, and to the beasts of the field. Thou shalt fall upon the open field; for I have spoken [it],

r chs. 6. 2; 38. 8.
s *cf.* Ps. 11. 2; 37. 14; 46. 9; 58. 7; 76. 3. 5. Hos. 2. 18.
t *cf.* Ps. 9. 3 10. Is. 14. 25-27; 34. 4.
u ch. 29. 5.

Jehovah made His everlasting covenant of peace with them? It is the day of Isa. xii. 2-6 when Israel shall prove the blessing of abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

The enemy thinks he is carrying out the purpose of his own heart, and in boastful pride assembles his hosts to take a spoil. The secret for faith is that Jehovah both leads and commands. It is a solemn lesson. How often must the proud "I will" of man bring him under the crushing stroke of Omnipotent power called into action to shield and deliver the objects of infinite love. Haughty Pharaoh must sink down before it. Midian's hosts must fall under its sword. Boastful Rabshakeh and the armies of Assyria must melt away before its blast. How many more of earth's mighty have fallen, must yet fall, before its withering breath! So too, but with higher thoughts, the Christian heart can say in the light of the inspired record, and rejoicing in Christ now enthroned, "Who shall separate us?" even though we be but as sheep accounted for the slaughter.

Sec. 3.

The interrogation of the merchant princes represents them as expressing surprise at Gog's multitude. Can it be simply for the taking of spoil? The greatness of the attack appears out of proportion to the smallness of the object. Thus might it appear to human eyes, but the deep underlying reason is given in Jehovah's answer. He draws forth *all* this army, that, as He says, "The nations may know Me when I shall be hallowed in thee, O Gog, before their eyes." The magnitude of Gog's undertaking would seem to the observant eyes of all the "young lions" of Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish without any prospect of adequate compensation, but all is clear when God's purpose is known. In this we get an example of how the wheels of divine government go round, carrying forward the throne and its glorious Occupant.

We have now a reference to former prophecies relating to these events. This at first may present a difficulty, for we do not find any previous prophetic announcement under the nation's names here given. The interrogative form rather excludes the thought of Gog being mentioned before. It is rather that the prophets for many years announced a great consummation in judgment, executed upon the nations having special relations with Israel, while also her pronounced enemies. The question is then, "Art thou he" in connection with whom this will find its full accomplishment? The answer is given affirmatively in the next verse, coupled with the declaration of Jehovah's wrath, and the terrible shaking which will be caused by His stroke of judgment.

saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will send a [v]fire on Magog, and among them that dwell at ease in the [w]isles: and they shall [z]know that I [am] Jehovah. And my [y]holy name will I make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not suffer my holy name to be profaned any more; and the nations [z]shall know that I [am] Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel.

v ch. 38. 19, 22. *cf.* ch. 30. 8, 16. ch. 28. 18. Is. 66. 14-16.
w ctr. Is. 49. 1; 60. 9; 66. 19; 42. 4, 10 *cf.* ch. 26. 15, 18.
x ch. 38. 16, 23, ver. 28.
y cf. ch. 36. 20-22; Is. 52. 6. *z* ch. 38. 16, 23; Ps 83.

It may be well to mention here several of the prophecies which point to this consummation. The name "Assyrian" is given to the last great enemy of Israel. He is associated with the north in Zeph. ii. 13; and Assyria is the land of the north from which Israel will be gathered (Isa. xxvii. 12, 13; Hosea xi. 11; Zech. x. 10; Jer. xvi. 15; xxiii. 8). Though "Assyria" and "Gog" seem names so very different, there is a similarity in their meaning which suggests moral identification, as well as that of locality, while the prophecies we shall refer to establish identity as to time, scene, and the character of judgment. Gog means either "extension" or "the topmost," both suggesting the ambition, pride and avarice which mark his conduct as given in our chapters. Assyria, from Asshur, means "a footstep," as going forward successfully, and this in boasted self-sufficiency, as Isaiah says (x. 8-11, 13, 14). In this very chapter Isaiah makes plain that the invasion and the consummation in judgment of which it speaks is not only future, but after the restoration and when Messiah is present (vers. 12, 17, 20, 21, 27). Thus he stands up against the Prince of princes as Dan. viii. states, and this is more emphatically affirmed by Micah (chap. v. 1-9). We know how direct the reference here is to Christ (vers. 1, 2), and then "He shall stand and shall feed His flock in the strength of the Lord," this being in beautiful accord with what Ezekiel has told us (xxxvi. 24-26). Following this we have the remarkable statement, "And this Man shall be the Peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land...and He shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land" (vers. 5, 6). And Jehovah says in reference to this time, "I will execute vengeance in anger and in fury upon the nations, such as they have not heard." This agrees with what we have considered to be the time of Gog's invasion, giving us good reason to link the prophecies regarding the Assyrian of the last days with those of Gog in Ezekiel. This we will find further strengthened by such passages as Isa. xvii. 12-14; chaps. xxv.; xxvi. 21; xxx. 18-33; Joel ii. 15-27; Nahum i.-iii., especially i. 11-15 and iii. 9; and Zech. 12. A careful consideration of these scriptures will lead us to see that, no matter what application they may have to the days which close the seventieth week of Daniel, they look on for full accomplishment in Gog's great gathering, though his name does not appear. Similarity of moral character and purpose, coincidence in time and characteristics of judgment, prevail throughout. They are in that way of the same generation as the Assyrian of Sennacherib's day, whose coming and defeat gave the text for many prophecies, while undoubtedly it was the foreshadow of the final consummation.

From these considerations we may conclude that Jehovah's words (ver. 17) indicate the wide scope to be attributed to the prophecies.

Section 5. (chap. xxxix. 8-16.)

Almighty strength: the glory brought to Israel through its exercise.

Behold, it cometh, and shall be done, saith the Lord Jehovah. This is the day whereof I have [a]spoken. And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall kindle fire, and burn weapons, and shields, and targets, bows and arrows, and hand-staves, and spears: and they shall

a ch. 38. 17.

They not only have an application to the action of Assyria at the time when that ancient empire flourished, but also to the King of the North, or Assyrian of the future, who shall be the desolator, or overflowing scourge, in the closing scenes of the seventieth week, God's battle-axe then as before upon a rebellious and idolatrous people; and finally the day when he shall come again as Gog from the north, to be utterly broken upon the mountains of Israel (Isa. x. 26, 27; xiv. 24-27 with our present chapters. Compare also Isa. x. 26; Judg. vii. 22 with ver. 11).

There follows a most graphic description of Jehovah revealed in judgment. It is a manifestation which while centering in the land of Israel reaches throughout the earth and affects all mankind. The overthrow is accomplished by internal strife, every man's sword against his brother; by pestilence and blood, that is, violent death, and by the downpour of destruction from heaven. Thus man in proud self-will and vaunted sufficiency has his own weapons turned against him, corruption and violence assail, while heaven's displeasure is revealed. Those who are against God must find that the forces of earth and heaven, combined with their own devices, carry them down to destruction. Self-will and pride must ever reap according to the sowing. It is an unvarying principle of the divine government. God has written this largely on the pages of history, but men in their folly will not learn, seemingly blinded by thinking that each successive effort will be the exception to the rule which prevails in all affairs physical, moral and spiritual.

Grace known by us in Christ does not deliver from this holy government of God. Rather, since it gives to us a higher place of favor than ever known to faith before, we have greater responsibility, and we become more directly subject to the action of such divine principles. The whole history of Israel enforces this lesson. It is the moral underlying the ministry of the prophets. It is pressed home upon the people by repeated strokes of judgment. David used the sword to accomplish his own sinful will, and the sword never departed from his house. Solomon consorted with strangers, his heart was led astray, and enemies arise in the very quarters from which he drew the means of pleasing himself (1 Kings xi.). Man's self-devised plans and wilful choice ever come back upon him with a harvest of results, which if he would only hear the Voice speaking in them, would bring him down before God in confessed impotency and sinfulness to receive the uplifting that is always given to those who humble themselves under God's mighty hand.

The divine purpose is clearly stated (vers. 16, 23). It is that Jehovah may be known, that "the earth shall be filled with the glory

make fires with them seven years. And no wood shall be taken out of the field, neither cut down out of the forests; for they shall make fire with the weapons; and they shall [b]spoil those that spoiled them, and plunder those that plundered them, saith the Lord Jehovah.

And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] I will give unto Gog a place there for burial in

[b] *cf.* Hab. 2. 1-8. Mic. 5. 8. Jud. 6. 1, 6 with 7. 19-25, and Is. 9. 4; 10. 24-34; 2 Chr. 14. 9-15; 2 Chr. 20.

of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9; Habak. iii. 14). "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship Thee; for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Rev. xv. 4). This alone can establish things in proper order, as the lack of it, or its refusal, only produces confusion and evil. It is to this end that judgment is brought in. Indeed, since sin came in it is alone through God's strange work that men can be brought to know Him. From the very beginning this has been so. Through the woman's sorrow and subjection, and the man's toil striving against the curse and blight of sin, God becomes known in mercy, grace and deliverance. He might have been known to His creatures through the Garden of Delights, earthly abundance, and ever-extending dominion, but this avenue was closed forever as far as the old creation is concerned, because of man's sin. It will be realized by the new creation on a higher plane and in intimate heavenly associations through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Thus does God triumph over evil, but by way of judgment, in which He is magnified, sanctified, and made known. And where more fully so than in the greatest of all judgments?—that of the Cross, at once the answer to every question raised by sin, the fullest manifestation of God in holiness, righteousness, and love, when indeed a greater than Gog is met and judged, even Satan, the prince and god of this world. In our individual experience it is still often through the Lord's judgments that we come to know Him in growing measure. Judgments which are either chastening for our waywardness, the discipline of love, or the disposing contrary to our proposing, or even allowing our will to have its demands granted that the bitter fruit of *our* way may be tasted, and so the sweetness of subjection to *His* way be realized. But ever it is the same love that gave Christ, working with and for us, love nevertheless which must prove itself holy to the objects of its richest blessing—to us. Our failure may not bring open discipline, He by the Holy Spirit may produce exercise and distress of heart which leads to self-judgment before Him, yet the salutary lesson will be kept before the soul by results reaped from our sowing which cannot be avoided. God graciously makes all contribute to a better knowledge of Himself. He is magnified and sanctified in these ways of judgment.

It is not that the believer has sin imputed to him, for to such pertains the blessedness of Romans 4, that of non-imputation, so that he does not come into judgment (John v. 24). This has to do with eternal issues, it is put in relation to our possession of eternal life, so that from this view-point we have passed out of the region of judgment. It remains true, however, that as in this blessed position we call on God "as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth

Israel, the valley of the passers-by* to the east of the sea; and it shall stop [the way] of the passers-by; and there shall they bury Gog and all the multitude; and they shall call it, The Valley of Hamon-Gog.† And seven months shall the

* This probably refers to some usual route of communication between the country east and that west of the Dead Sea. In view of the use of this same word in vers. 14, 15, it can hardly be applied to the hosts of Gog, as some suggest. The "passers-by" are evidently distinct from the "men of continual employment." May not the reference be, as Kiel suggests, to "travellers who pass through the land?" If so, and they are called upon with those men of special appointment to engage in burying the dead as they pass through the land, instead of going by the usual route of the valley, it being closed (ver. 11), we may see how in this way the knowledge of what God had done to Gog would be carried to distant peoples, for travellers thus made to serve either in burying or setting up signs would naturally inquire concerning the details of this signal event, and spread the news as they travelled. Thus would Israel's renown and Jehovah's glory be made known, as v.13 intimates.—(J.B.).

† Meaning, "multitude of Gog."

according to each man's work," and are to pass the time of our sojourn in fear, conscious of the redemption we have through the precious blood of Christ, and responsible as obedient children to be holy in all our behavior, "Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. i. 14-18). Thus we are under the Father's government. Its principles find illustration all through Scripture, and that quite fully in the Old Testament, where we get the record of the various dealings of God with those who are given places of privilege and responsibility. Hence the value and importance of all Scripture, and its use for teaching, conviction, correction, and instruction (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). Its essential unity is known by the exhibition of the same divine principles in the greatest possible variety of circumstance and instrumentality. This Word "endureth forever"—"Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in the heavens." It is the heavens that shall rule for blessing to all creation. This will surely be exercised according to that Word which is *now* to rule us as born from above, born by that Word and the Spirit. The position of this verse in the psalm (cxix. 89) offers an interesting numerical study. That psalm is an alphabetic acrostic "of the most regular and perfect kind," and this verse opens its *twelfth* section — *Lamed* being the twelfth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is the number of divine government, heavenly in character and manifestly exercised over all creation (3x4), as the psalm expresses. But to this we may add that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet (as also the Greek) have a definite numerical value. In this case it is thirty (3x10), divine and heavenly manifestation in that completeness of divine order, both Godward and manward, which ten suggests. All of this is found in and through the Word, and the exercise of that holy government which is according to it and revealed in it.

Sec. 4.

We return to the announcement with which we began, so that by reiteration emphasis is given to what Jehovah declares. His unalter-

house of Israel be burying them, that they [b]may [c]cleanse the land; and all the people of the land shall bury [them]; and it shall be to them for renown in the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord Jehovah. And they shall sever out men of continual employment to go through the land, who, with the passers-by, shall bury those that remain upon the face of the land, to cleanse it: at the end of seven months shall they make a search. And the passers-by shall pass through the land, and when [any] seeth a man's bone, he shall set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon-Gog. And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they [d]cleanse the land.

c cf. Num. 19. 11–16.

d ver. 12.

able "I will" assures complete accomplishment. Added to the repetition of Jehovah's purpose we now have location specified—"from the uttermost (or farthest) north." This helps to identify Gog with whatever power may occupy Russian territory at this time, while the similarity of detail in many prophecies leads us also to link him with the Assyrian, or King of the North.

As Jehovah has told of Gog's coming and purpose, also revealing His own relation and purpose, now He shows Gog's impotence to accomplish his plan—he is only a creature, vanity. The bow and arrows are smitten from his hands—at the very moment they are drawn ready for the attack, bow in left hand, arrows in right, the blow falls. How often the attainment of some self-cherished object or wilful plans seems within the grasp, and sudden blight comes. Instead of vanquishing, we are vanquished. The self-chosen way or plan is suddenly turned to our destruction. Why? God has been left out of the carefully devised arrangements. Sensual wisdom has ruled instead of that wisdom which is from above which is first pure; and God must sanctify Himself in relation to us by showing Himself in opposition. "With the froward, Thou wilt show Thyself froward." And here we must mark a distinction, for the Hebrew words for "froward" are different. The first means perverse, crafty, false, and "is said only of the mind falling from rectitude" (Gog's sin, xxxviii. 10); while the second speaks of the wrestling of one opposed, who strives until he overcomes. These chapters illustrate this text. But are there not chapters in our individual lives which convey the same lesson? How slow we are to learn! Yet God has given many warning lessons in His holy Word.

Gog then is permitted to reach the mountains he has lusted after, only to be given a prey to the ravenous bird and beast. "Lust when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is completed, bringeth forth death" (James i. 15). How often the grave is the answer to the heart's folly! Instead of taking a spoil, proud Gog falls a prey. "Extension" he did not find, nor "the topmost" place, for which he strove in pride and self-sufficiency; instead, he ignominiously falls without striking a blow to advance his selfish interests, and finds a grave in the valley.

Section 6. (chap. xxxix. 17-21.)
The mighty a prey

And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Speak unto the birds of every wing, and to every beast of the field, Gather yourselves and come, assemble yourselves on every side to my [e]sacrifice which I sacrifice for you, a great sacrifice upon the [f]mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, [and] of bullocks, all of them fatted beasts of [g]Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye are full, and drink blood till ye are drunken, of my sacri-

e ver. 4. cf. Zeph. 1. 7, 8. Is. 34. 6. Jer. 46. 9, 10. Rev. 19. 17, 18. Is. 11. 4. 2 Thess. 1. 7-9.
f vers. 2, 4.
g cf. Ps. 22. 12. Amos 4. 1. Deut. 33. 22 with Gen. 49. 16, 17.

The results of this overthrow shall be as a fire on Magog, reaching to the distant isles where they had thought to dwell securely, secure, perhaps, from the disastrous judgments that had fallen in rapid succession in the land at the time of the Lord's appearing in glory. In this Jehovah lets the nations know that His judgment can reach to the uttermost bounds, and so "they shall know that I am the Lord." Their security must be found in knowing Him, and this at once destroys every other fancied safety, opening the only true sanctuary to them.

In all this a threefold purpose finds accomplishment. Jehovah is manifest as dwelling in the midst of Israel. He is there in holy, preserving, delivering power. This will make true in the fullest way the desire expressed by Moses: "Wherein shall it be known that I have found grace in Thine eyes, I and Thy people, except in that Thou goest with us? and we shall be distinguished, I and Thy people, from all the people which are on the face of the earth." Then, "Neither will I suffer My holy name to be profaned anymore." This had taken place in the past. Though Jehovah had humbled and stricken Israel in judgment, using the nations as the rod of His anger, they whom He used had not considered; mocking and boasting, they had blasphemed Jehovah's name. Surely He was of less account than their own idol-gods. He could not defend nor save His professed people! They gloried in wasting the land and the people that bore that name. Israel had made Jehovah to serve with their sins, so that His name was dishonored among the Gentiles. The very judgments His holiness must visit upon His sinful people resulted to His dishonor in the eyes of the nations. The overwhelming judgment of Gog will cause this reproach to pass away, for it will demonstrate His power over the mightiest of earth. Furthermore, all that profaned that holy name in Israel will also have been purged out, and the nation will be holiness unto the Lord. Finally, through this consummation of judgment "the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel."

There is a voice in this for us. We, too, individually or collectively, stand identified with the holy name of Christ. Is that name sullied because of our failure? Do we commend Him before the eyes of the world? Or does our carelessness, our indifference, make

fice which I sacrifice for you. And ye shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will set [h]my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see [i]my judgment which I have executed, and [j]my hand which I have laid upon them.

[h] ver. 13. ch. 38. 16, 23. *cf.* Ex. 9. 16. Is. 37. 20. Ps. 97. Ps. 102. 15. Is 11. 10; 60. 1-3.
[i] *cf.* Is. 26. 9. Mic. 5. 15. Ps. 126, ch. 28. 25, 26. Ps. 9. 16. Is. 42 1-4.
[j] *cf.* Ex. 7. 4.

Him serve with our sins in the world's eyes because His name is named upon us? He is not visible; we are to be His living representatives, His ambassadors. May the impress of His image be upon us! For this we must be much in the secret place of communion, learning from Him, sitting at His blessed feet.

Sec. 5. (Chap. xxxix. 8-16.)

Judgment executed upon proud flesh always leaves its aftermath to which the torch must be applied, or for which the grave must be dug. The collapse of every self-willed fleshly plan leaves that which must be removed or buried out of sight as loathsome and corrupt. Who that has experienced deliverance out of a snare by God's blight falling upon some cherished plan conceived in the will of the flesh, has not found plenty to burn and bury? Yet it is thus we spoil the spoiler and plunder the plunderer, while the graves of our lust are a memorial, warning by the lessons they teach, but leading the exercised soul to confidence in an ever faithful God, so that after all He is glorified.

The prophet is first assured of the absolute certainty of these events. It is the day of which Jehovah has spoken (xxxviii. 18, 19), the day referred to in the many prophecies already mentioned. The arms of a stricken foe are usually gathered and preserved as trophies, or if fit for use stored in the arsenals of the victor. Not so here; they are consumed by fire. Might not Israel have future use for all this vast store? Would it not be prudence to preserve it? Why? They who dwelt in peace without walls or gates or bars had not used a weapon to strike the foe! They had not been called to fight, Jehovah had accomplished the overthrow. It was like that of the ancient Assyrian host, the foreshadow of Gog, when the angel of the Lord went forth and smote 185,000, and "behold, they were all dead corpses" (Isa. xxxvii. 36). The day for sword and spear had passed. The fires that burned for seven years would witness to this, as also to Israel's confidence being in Jehovah. For how different a purpose to that of Gog shall then the gathering of the nations to Jerusalem be (Isa. ii. 1-4).

The land is now cleansed of its defilement through death by the burial of Gog's multitude. This place of a grave will abide a memorial to posterity; they who pass by will stop there to consider Jehovah's judgment. Geographically this valley is difficult to locate, though the language suggests the vicinity of the Dead Sea, and also a route of general communication between the land and the east of the sea. That the lesson may not be forgotten the valley shall be called Hamon-Gog, "multitude of Gog," and a city shall bear a name memorializing this judgment.

Section 7. (chap. xxxix. 22-29.)
The perfect completion of God's ways with His people

And the [k]house of Israel shall know that I [am] Jehovah their God from that day and forward. And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into [l]captivity for their iniquity, because they trespassed against me; and I [m]hid my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies, so that they fell all of them by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions [n]I did unto them, and I hid my face from them.

k vers. 7. 28. *cf.* Is. 12. Ps. 46. Hos. 13. 4. Ps. 59. 13. Ps. 100. Joel 2. 27; 3. 17. ch. 34.27-31.
l cf. ch. 36. 16-23. Deut. 28. 15-68.
m Is. 54. 8; 57. 17; 59. 2. *cf.* Deut. 31. 17, 18; 32. 15-20. Is. 64. 6, 7. *cfr.* ch 22.26. Is. 28. 15; 53. 3.
n cf. Lev. 26. 14-45; Deut. 32. 23-26; Ezra 9. 7; Ps. 78. 55 64.

This burial of the slain shall be for Israel a renown. It will give them a name of fame, of honor, before all nations. They bury the foe, instead of being buried under the weight of Gog's avalanche. This is so, because it is the day upon which Jehovah is glorified in overcoming their enemies.

Sec. 6. (Chap. xxxix. 17-21.)

The sacrifice of judgment provides a feast for bird and beast. It is spread upon the mountains of Israel which had been laid waste when the nations surfeited themselves with the spoil of Jehovah's people; but there now the rich and mighty of the nations fall to utter destruction. Where once they had spoiled, they are now taken for a spoil. Such is the sowing and the reaping.

Sec. 7. (Chap. xxxix. 22-29.)

The perfect completion of God's holy ways in government with His people, and their establishment in full blessing, is now expressed as a fitting conclusion. First, the work of judgment confirms Israel beyond all question in the knowledge of Jehovah as their God. Secondly, it answers conclusively every question raised to profane Jehovah's name because of Israel's abject condition for the centuries of her dispersion. It was not because He was weak, unable to save, though it might appear so to the mocking eyes of unbelief. It was because He was holy, and must hide His face from them because of their iniquity. So He gave them into the hands of the adversaries, otherwise they could have had no power. This history read in the light of Gog's judgment will witness to the righteousness and holiness of Jehovah to whom now all the earth must bow. It also becomes the lesson book for the restored nation (ver. 28), while none shall be left out of blessing, nor shall God's face be anymore hid from them. The Sun of Righteousness has arisen, and in its perpetual shining they shall ever rejoice. Likewise shall we, when in the glory of Christ's day we read the lesson book of life's history, which the judgment-seat of Christ will enable us to interpret according to divine righteousness and holiness. What a blessed knowledge this will give us of the Holy and the True, while being then forever like Him no cloud shall ever come between us and the glorious shining of His face!

Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Now will I [o]bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; and they shall bear* their confusion, and all their unfaithfulness in which they have acted unfaithfully against me, when they shall dwell [p]safely in their land, and none shall make them afraid; when I have brought them again from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations. And they shall know that I [am] Jehovah their God, in that I caused them to be led into captivity among the nations, and have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. And I will not hide my face any more from them, for I shall have poured out [q]my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.

o *cf.* Deut. 30. 3. Ps. 14. 7. Ps. 126. Jer. 30.3,18; 32. 44. Joel 3. 1. Amos 9. 13-15.

p Jer. 23. 6; 32. 37, 38. chs.28.24-26; 38. 8, 11, 14.

q Joel 2. 28. ch. 36. 25-29; ch. 37. 14. Is. 44. 3; 59. 21; 32. 15.

* It is not bearing shame in the sense of outward disgrace, but as bearing the inward realization of unworthiness, into which they are brought by the manifestation of the goodness of Jehovah on their behalf.—(J.B.)

God is jealous of His holy name, He acts to vindicate it, and in this His people get their full blessing. How gloriously redemption accomplishes both—His glory and our blessing. And so with Israel in that day. But their dwelling securely as regathered will only give them a deeper realization of their shame and trespasses. The grace that restores and blesses writes more deeply upon the heart the failure of which we may be guilty than does the rod of judgment, which may leave of necessity a bleeding furrow. Thus shall the matchless glory of His presence, the perfect grace and kindness displayed in our being there, only make us read more deeply the awful meaning of sin, while we raise our anthem before the throne, "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood."

The blessing of those Millennial days will be found through the outpoured Spirit (ver. 29). Whatever may be the difference in dispensation, He has always been the active Divine Agent of blessing. From the time of His brooding upon the face of the waters, He has wrought in loving ministry for the creature. For us the blessing is the highest because of His personal indwelling of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and His baptism of all such into one Body united to Christ in glory. Though this will not be true of Millennial days, and the presence and activity of the Spirit will then be after the order which the Old Testament makes known, yet it will be in greater fulness and with effects far more widespread than known in the days of old. It will be the glorious time of creation's deliverance from its groan, and its enjoyment of the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. viii. 21).

SUBDIVISION 3. (chaps. 40-48).

This final vision of Ezekiel has for its background the whole of his preceding prophecies. It is in the form of a great plan with accompanying specifications, drawn with the utmost care, delineated with mathematical exactness, and intended to give expression by its sharp outlines to those principles of God's holiness and government which are set forth in the earlier messages of the book.

It is important for us to get a general view before studying any of the details.

It is not hard to see that the prophet embodies in the plan of the Sanctuary and the related subjects the great central truth of God's holiness, and the divine order which must govern for blessing to be realized. Expression to this is given symbolically in the wonderful structure presented in the vision, and upon which in its glorious Millennial execution all the nations of the world will look as they come to worship.

The truth of God's holiness has been the theme pervading all of Ezekiel's utterances, whether directed to Israel or the nations. Throughout the object in view is declared to be the knowledge of Jehovah in the holiness of His nature and government. This had been most seriously called in question by the rebellion and sin of His professed people. They had obscured His character and profaned His holiness in the eyes of the nations.

The presentation of this fundamental truth in relation to Jehovah not only leads to the fullest exposure, arraignment, and judgment of Israel in the light of the glorious manifestation of God given to the prophet (chs. i.-xxiv.), but the prophet is led on to pronounce judgment upon the surrounding nations who had shown themselves enemies of God and His people, so that complete manifestation of Jehovah may be made in all the earth (chaps. xxv.-xxxii.).

Not only is Jehovah to be manifested in withering everything contrary to Himself by the breath of His holy judgment, proceeding from that august Presence which is revealed at the beginning of the book and broods over all its action, but He also is manifested in grace in resurrection power, restoring the prodigal to Himself in the power of the Spirit and as a new creation, followed by the defeat of the last unholy assault of the enemy (chs. xxxiii.-xxxix.). Now that a people have been created suited to God and His holiness, we fittingly close with the picture of the divine order for Sanctuary, priesthood, people and land.

The book opens with visions of God which set forth His almighty majesty; His unerring, ever harmonious movement toward the predestined end; His will in holy government, to which all creation must bow, to the accomplishment of which all events must contribute. The book closes with the vision of the Sanctuary in which this glorious Presence takes up His dwelling, in the plan of which He intends all creation to learn the truth of His character and relation to creation, since it forms a visible expression of the very truth His prophet has so emphatically spoken.

We view things here according to the visions of God. We do not pass through the land to the Sanctuary, but begin with the sacred enclosure and proceed outward to the people and land. This is like the description of the tabernacle. It begins with the ark, the throne

and mercy seat (Exod. xxv.). Or, again, like the sacrifices in Lev. i-vi., the burnt offering is first, that in which all went up as a sweet savor to God. Then, too, this vision commences at the East Gate, that at which a little later the glory is to enter (chap. xliii. 1-4). This is ever the foundation of all blessing. We must begin with God, we must take His view-point. From this all unfolds in divine order, and with absolute precision.

It is rather remarkable that there is only a single measurement which we can certainly define as being a measurement of height (xli. 8) in the whole of this minute specification. As to the sanctuary, it is exclusively a ground-plan which is before us. This marks utter indifference to what seems to man a very great, if not the greatest, element of architecture. Nothing is considered to affect the imagination so much as height or loftiness of space, especially in a religious sense. "The height, the span, the gloom, the glory" of a venerable Gothic cathedral do not enter into the conception before us. It is characteristic of man in his pride and rebellion to aim at building a tower which will reach to heaven. In this an important principle may find illustration. Man's blessing is not found through his efforts to reach up to God, but through God coming down to him. Many are the illustrations of this, commencing with the scene in the garden (Gen. iii.), which enforce the general truth that "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John iii.). As a result of this coming down there is a great spreading out in relation to which height becomes an insignificant factor—the mountain is brought low, and the valley filled, for the revelation of Jehovah's glory (Isa. xl. 3-5).

In a general survey of the whole arrangement laid out in this vision, several general principles may be discerned as ruling this presentation of the fundamental truth of holiness. We may define them as separation, gradation, symmetry, sacrifice.

That *separation* is of great importance in manifesting the character and name of God comes out in chapter xliii. 7-12, where comparison is made with the first temple arrangements. Great defilement had arisen through the close proximity of the royal buildings to the Sanctuary, for the wickedness and idolatry of those who often occupied the former had been introduced into the latter. Further, the sharp distinction between the priests and Levites (chap. xliv. 5-16) emphasizes the thought of separation, the guarding against all undue familiarity with the presence of Jehovah, and the exercise of His government in holiness. It is to be noted how past disorders are brought forward both to show the need of, and to enforce, the ordinances of the new Sanctuary. The same may be observed as to the priestly garments and the people, and other related details (xlii. 14; xliv. 19). All is manifestly designed to impress the observer with the distinct sanctity of Jehovah and His dwelling-place. This is a needful lesson for all times, and in the days to which these visions of God refer it will be not only enforced by precept, but will have its continual display before the whole world in the plan and service of the Sanctuary, to which all nations shall come to worship.

A second principle of importance may be called *gradation*—a relative subordination or arrangement of parts so as to produce the desired effect, or express some one great truth. This is expressed in a way that could not fail to set forth the fundamental idea of holiness, and so give before the eyes of all a constant witness to this

essential characteristic of Jehovah, who will then rule from Mount Zion over all the earth. First, as moving toward the divine centre, we have Israel's separation from the nations; then the oblation in the midst of the land; then the Sanctuary with its walls and courts; finally the Temple and its three graded apartments—porch, holy place, and most holy place. The whole plan is a most impressive portrayal of the Divine majesty and holiness in the power and truth of which the Millennial blessing will be maintained. It will give an ever present object lesson to the world such as it has never seen before. Note, too, that the outer court is entered by *seven* steps, the inner by *eight*, and the House by *ten*. It is an entrance into what is perfect as to its form and order (7); established in the blessing of the New Covenant, a new beginning for Israel (8); and all this through God manifest in holy government according to the fulness of the divine measure (10). God ever leads the creature, as to its learning and experience, by successive steps, into the secret of His presence. We may learn this as a general principle of God's ways in the tabernacle and its arrangement, in the days of creation, and in the recorded experiences of men of God. Whatever may be the absolute and perfect fulness of our standing, made ours the moment faith lays hold of God according to His Word, the apprehension or learning of it is by gradation, by successive steps. This, in one way, narrows the sphere, for constriction marks the gradation as we draw near the Divine presence, and yet in another way it is an introduction into the fulness of God. After speaking of the all-various wisdom of God, the eternal purpose in Christ, and the breadth, length, depth, and height which are connected with the riches of God's glory, the apostle brings us to the love of Christ, the heart of all, which had its positive and full manifestation at the Cross in every way. This may appear to be constriction, a narrowing down to that upon which our hearts may rest in what, as we may say, is concrete. This is needful for us, and ever will be so. But having reached the concentrated centre of all, notice there is immediate expansion, "which surpasses knowledge; that ye may be filled even to all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii.). Having found the divine centre we look out upon the vast expanse of grace and glory. Again, he speaks of "every family in the heavens and on earth," but the making known of the all-various wisdom of God is narrowed down to the assembly, though it will surely radiate to the utmost bounds. This mode of revelation is expressed in the most wonderful way of all, in a way seemingly constricted, if you please, yet ever abiding inscrutable, when we consider Christ in whom "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*." From the contemplation of the incomprehensible vastness of all things which that fulness ever pervades in a variety of constant manifestations we come to *Him*, and hear those marvelous words, the like of which cannot be found elsewhere, "Ye are complete in Him." It is interesting in this very connection to find that, not the holiest of all, but the *great altar* is the exact centre of the whole sanctuary enclosure (see plan). What a striking testimony to the truth of the Person and Work of Christ upon which is founded the glory of God and the blessing of man for time and eternity! May not the significance of this have influenced the mind of the godly remnant who later returned from Babylon? for they first set up the altar, and in it they found their protection in face of the surrounding peoples (Ezra iii. 1-3). Again,

in Noah's day, the altar is prominent at the new beginning which is made after the purging judgment, typical, as we may well take this to be, of the Millennial scene after the introductory judgments of the day of the Lord. Then at the commencement of Solomon's reign—another Millennial picture—the altar is the great gathering centre, and also the place of God's revelation and blessing (2 Chron. i.).

Symmetry is another general principle illustrated in the plan and arrangements presented in this vision. Throughout there is a perfect balancing of the different parts in relative proportion and harmony. The constantly recurring square of 100 cubits, the whole sanctuary space being comprised of 25 such squares, and the preponderance of the numbers five and ten in the measurements, are suggestive in the light of what these numbers mean in Scripture. Such exactness of measurement and attention to detail as we find here must have as an underlying principle the harmonious arrangement of every part and relation as affecting both the buildings and the personnel of the Sanctuary. What do these things teach us? In the perfect balancing of every part we see how with God there is nothing of unevenness or undue proportion. Every element and feature of His character is in perfect adjustment and harmonious manifestation. It is found in its moral and spiritual display in Jesus, and it will be in constant manifestation before all created intelligences throughout eternity when God is "all in all." Further, it exhibits to us that there is perfect harmony, absolute precision, and perfect balance in His relation to the whole universe, or to the individual, in His every act, and in all His ways of wisdom, power, grace and love, in perfect holiness. The knowledge of this shall engage us for all eternity, when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face, and known even as we are known. Then we shall say in a way impossible to us now, "O depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counsellor? Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be rendered to him? For of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things: to Him be glory forever, Amen" (Rom. xi. 33-36).

As previously mentioned, five and ten are here the prominent basic numbers of measurement. We have become familiar with the first as signifying how the weak creature and the Almighty God are brought together, an accomplishment possible only through grace, so that it is a number we find identified with the blessing of redemption. In its common division of four and one (4+1) it suggests the thought of the world and man, in his own natural weakness, under the gracious yet absolute government of God. It leads us, therefore, to the idea of responsibility on the part of the creature in his relation to God as sovereign over all. These things in display become a wonderful testimony (2) to the Divine fulness (3) — 5 as 2+3. Such thoughts fit in admirably with the "visions of God," which close Ezekiel. For they treat of the time when the new covenant in its gracious work, founded upon redemption, shall be made good in all its blessing to Israel, and the sovereignty of God and His perfect administration of government shall be exercised over all creation, in which indeed there shall be a visible display of the Divine characters in the righteous reign of Christ—the *fifth* universal kingdom (Dan. ii.).

In the 25 (5x5) squares of 100 cubits which comprise the sanctuary enclosure we have these things intensified. This intimates that their concentrated expression is found in the plan and ordinances of the Sanctuary, the holy of holies of the earth. This number (25) is also prominent in other parts of the vision (chaps. xl., xlv., xlviii.).

In the 100 cubits so constantly repeated we have 5x20 (5x4, or 10x2 or 10+10). The latter number (20) appears in the holy and most holy places, also other adjacent parts, and must therefore be of some importance. The first division of this number (5x4) would suggest the truth of five intensified by universal application, four being the number of creation. This, indeed, will be the great lesson of the Millennial reign, that dispensation of the fulness of times, and the redemption of the purchased possession, accompanied as that will be with the manifestation of the sons of God. For the measuring of the other two possible divisions of the number twenty, we must first think of the meaning of ten, for it, too, appears as fundamental to the divine plan and order here revealed. In brief, it presents the perfection of divine government in the ordering of relations both Godward and manward (5+5), as, for example, we see in the ten commandments, and this as manifesting in fulness (3) the Divine perfections (7) (10=3+7), which, on the other hand, constitutes the witness (2) of the bringing together in grace of the weak creature and the Almighty God (5) in active display (10=5x2). That from this, ten should be expressive of full responsibility (as also of judgment, since it relates to the accomplishment or non-accomplishment of responsibility), is easily understood, and finds illustration in Scripture. All of these things will be given fullest manifestation in the Millennium. To this the abundant testimony of the prophets concerning its characteristics bears witness. It is not, therefore, surprising that this number should play such an important part in the plan of the Sanctuary, which is the heart of the administration and manifestation of this glorious kingdom as established on the earth. Twenty, then, as the product resulting from the use of *two*, may suggest to us the competent testimony which will be given at that wonderful epoch to the things of which we have just spoken. Further, 100 is a dominant factor throughout, and so stamps the essential meaning of *ten* upon the whole arrangement here spread out for our contemplation. Well may we say that a perfect symmetry governs everywhere.

There is minute care and great exactness shown in making this plan and in defining the relations of the several parts. This is also true as to the ordinances of service for the Prince, priests, Levites and people. All this is surely designed to press upon heart and conscience God's intense interest in the important truth presented in this great picture.

A fourth general principle, which stands out prominently, is the permanent memorial of *sacrifice*, maintained in the presence of the revealed glory. It is not sacrifice rendered with a view of obtaining salvation, but sacrifice in view of accomplished salvation, which has been blessedly developed for us in chaps. xxxvi.-xxxix.

Before closing this general survey, it may be well to speak of some remarkable omissions. In the order of feasts Pentecost is not mentioned. This, as we know, presents distinctively Christian truth which, being fully accomplished in the Church—no longer on the earth at the time this vision contemplates—is fittingly omitted from

the feasts celebrated in the Millennium. There is no allusion to the ark. Is not this because of the more wondrous throne of glory which the prophet sees first in the visions of God which open the book, and which later he sees entering the House in the same form? This abides forever, filling the House (chap. xliii. 3-7). Every truth that the ark and mercy seat symbolize is found expressed in an intensified form in this remarkable chariot of the Divine glory, and over all is "the appearance of a Man." All mention of any High Priest is omitted. This would seem to find its explanation in that when Christ bears the glory, sitting and ruling upon His throne, He is spoken of as "a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 12, 13). From this passage we may also gather a suggestion as to why so much of seeming importance, needful for the construction of this great Sanctuary, such as measurements of height and details of style and treatment of both the exterior and interior of buildings and courts, is not given. Messiah, says Zechariah, "shall build the temple of Jehovah: even He shall build the temple of Jehovah." When He unrolls the completed design, and all that is needed is added to what was given to Ezekiel, then shall it be said, as once before when only the type of the glory was filling the eyes of the Queen of Sheba, "Behold, the half of the greatness of Thy wisdom was not told me." There is no king mentioned. Again Zechariah gives us the answer: "And Jehovah shall be king over all the earth...the nations...shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts, and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. xiv. 9, 16, 17).

In contrast to these omissions, we have "the Prince," who has a unique and highly favored position. It is his privilege to occupy the eastern gate at which the glory of Jehovah entered. To him the offerings of the people are given, and by him administered in providing for the ritual of sacrifice. It does not appear that the people bring sacrifices of themselves, but that it is the Prince who gives all for the prescribed ritual, including the daily burnt offering (xlv. 17). The people are spoken of as simply worshipping at the times of offering by the Prince, but the act of offering is his, the priests and Levites acting in their respective capacities. He thus fills a representative position on behalf of the people in the matter of specific offerings, while in all of these the people may be considered as having their part, since, in the first instance, they present their offerings to the Prince (xlv.13-17), and join in worship when he offers. It would seem also that he occupies a representative position for God toward the people, since he is privileged to commune with Jehovah at the East Gate.

Finally, we may note that the omission of very much concerning the interior decoration, and the details of furniture, all so fully presented in relation to both the tabernacle and the first temple, only the more gives prominence and throws emphasis upon the great fundamental idea which it must be evident fills the whole vision. We have sought to show that this is the holiness of Jehovah. "Thou, son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, *that they may be confounded at their iniquities;* and let them measure the pattern." The mind and purpose of God are revealed to His people that they (and we too) may rightly judge both themselves and their history in the light of the revelation, and also acquire the needed wisdom to correct and direct all their ways. The things written aforetime were written for our learning.

It may be helpful to give in tabulated form the contents of these chapters. This will aid us in getting a comprehensive view of the whole subject.

SUBDIVISION 3. (chaps. 40-48).

The Glory dwelling in the Restored Land.

The principal subjects are:

The new Temple buildings, the entry of Jehovah into the House, the great altar, and the service of consecration (chaps. 40-43).

The ordinances regarding the personnel of the Sanctuary—priests and Levites (chap. 44).

The ordinances regarding the provision for the priests, Levites, and Prince, with his special responsibility to provide for the ritual in the Temple (chaps. 45: 1-17).

The ordinances regarding special and daily services in the Temple —the feasts, sabbaths, new moons, and offerings of the Prince (chaps. 45: 18—46: 24).

The river issuing from the Temple (chap. 47: 1-12).

The boundaries of the holy land, and the privileges granted to strangers who sojourn among the tribes (chap. 47: 13-23).

The divisions of the land (chap. 48).

SECTION 1. (chaps. 40, 41).

The Sanctuary, the holy of holies, where the glory will dwell.

1. (40: 1-4) The occasion of the vision.
   (1-3) The time, place, and communicator.
   (4) The eyes, ears, and heart to be engaged.
   The testimony to be given.
2. (40: 5-47) THE GATES AND COURTS: the precincts of the House.
   1. (5-27) *The first court*: the place of general assemblage.
      (5) The wall.
      (6-16) The *Eastern* Gate.
      (17-19) Chambers, Pavement, and measurement of Court.
      (20-23) The *Northern* Gate.
      (24-27) The *Southern* Gate.
   2. (28-46). The *inner court*: and its gateways: the place of separation for priestly service.
      (28-31) The *Southern* Gate.
      (32-34) The *Eastern* Gate.
      (35-37) The *Northern* Gate.
      (38-43) Chambers for washing the burnt-offering.
      Four tables for slaying the burnt, sin, and trespass offerings.
      Eight tables for the sacrifices.
      Four tables for the instruments.
      Double hooks for sacrificial purposes.
      (44-46) Chambers for the priests, keepers of the charge of the House, and keepers of the charge of the altar.
   3. (47) *The Altar*: the divine centre.
3. (40: 48—41: 4). *The House itself* into which the visible glory shall enter.
   1. (40: 48, 49) The porch.
   2. (41: 1, 2) The holy place.
   3. (41: 3, 4) The most holy.

4. (41: 5-11). *The chambers around the House*: the encompassment of divine fulness realized through accomplished creative sovereignty (3x10x3, 90 chambers in all).
   (5-7) Their construction and relation to the house.
   (8) The elevation of 6 cubits.
   (9-11) Adjacent spaces and way of entrance to chambers.
5. (41: 12-14) *The separate place*: God in government maintaining holiness, according to the fulness of the divine measure (10x10).
   (12) The building to the west.
   (13, 14) The two squares of 100 cubits each occupied by the two previously described buildings.
6. (41: 15-26) *Interior details*: symbolic of Messianic triumph.
   1. (15-21) General character: all established by measure in glory and righteousness.
   2. (22) The altar of wood: fellowship.
   3. (23-26) The doors: the manner of entrance.

SECTION 2. (chap. 42).

The arrangements provided to preserve the service of the Sanctuary in separation from defilement.

1. (1-12) The chambers before the separate place.
2. (13-14) The purposes served by these chambers.
3. (15-20) The established separation of the whole sacred enclosure.

SECTION 3. (chap. 43).

The glory of Jehovah filling the House.

1. (1-12) The place of the throne, glorious in majesty and holiness.
   1. (1-6) The *glory* itself.
   2. (7-11) The place of the throne—the seat of *government.*
   3. (12) The mount of holiness.
2. (13-17) The altar—the place of *sacrifice.*
3. (18-27) The offerings at the sanctification of the altar and the priests—the place of *worship.*

(*Note, The people and their rulers are reproved and corrected,* 7-11).

SECTION 4. (chap. 44).

Regulations concerning those who minister in the Sanctuary.

1. (1-3) The supremacy of Jehovah: regulations regarding the Eastern gate, and the Prince's privilege to use it.
2. (4-14) The judgment and holiness which become His House: regulations regarding service in keeping the gates, and slaying the sacrifices; those who shall not be permitted to serve, and the Levites who are to minister in these ways, with the reason for their exclusion from the priesthood.
3. (15-31) The priests: the features of their place and portion as sanctified unto Jehovah. They minister at the altar, are to be only sons of Zadok; their garments, their marriage, their service as teachers and judges, their preservation from defilement, their maintenance, are subjects of regulation.

(*Note, The people, Levites and priests are reproved and corrected,* 6-13).

SECTION 5 (chaps. 45, 46).

Divine government exercised in the apportionment of the land, and the establishment of ordinances for worship and service.

1. (45:1-8) The division of the land in which the Lord's claim is given *first* place.
   The portion for the priests...25,000x10,000
   The portion for the Levites..25,000x10,000 } 25,000x25,000.
   The portion for the City.....25,000x 5,000
   The portion for the Prince...
2. (45: 9-12) Justness in practical dealings required by Him whose ways are full of mercy and truth. Regulations as to weight, measure, and coinage.
3. (45:13—46:15). The materials for, and the order of, worship.
   1. (13-17) The gifts of the people: these are rendered to the Prince whose charge is to provide for the sacrifices.
   2. (18-25) The yearly feasts.
      (*a*) The offerings to cleanse and atone for the House.
      (*b*) The passover and feast of unleavened bread.
      (*c*) The feast of tabernacles.
   3. (46:1-7) The sabbaths and new moons.
   4. (8-10) The manner of entrance and exit.
   5. (11) The regulation as to the meal-offering.
   6. (12) The Prince's free-will offering.
   7. (13-15) The daily burnt-offering.
4. (46: 16-18) Warning against oppression.
5. (19-24) Guarding the holy things.

(*Note, Princes are reproved and corrected,* 45: 8-12 and 46: 16-18).

(*Note the prominence of the Prince throughout this section*).

SECTION 6. (chap. 47: 1-12).

The victory over curse.

The waters of continual refreshment and blessing flowing forth from the Temple.

SECTION 7. (chaps. 47: 13—48: 35).

The perfect land, for "the Lord is there."

1. (47: 13-21) The boundaries of the land.
2. (22, 23) Care for the stranger.
3. (48: 1-7) The tribes *north* of the sacred oblation.
4. (8-22) The sacred oblation: the universal centre of glory, government, and worship.
5. (23-29) The tribes *south* of the sacred oblation.
6. (30-35) The gates of the city.
7. (35) The name of the city.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xl.-xlviii.)

The Glory dwelling in the Restored Land

Section 1 (Chaps. xl., xli.).
The "Sanctuary, the holy of holies,"* where the glory will dwell.

1 (xl. 1-4): The occasion of the vision.

1. In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was [r]smitten,

r ch 33. 21. 2 Kings 25. 4. Jer. 39. 1-7; 52. 4-11.

* Cf. chap. 45: 2-4.

Sec. 1.

Our attention is first called to the Sanctuary and its various precincts, the dwelling-place of the divine glory during the Millennial kingdom. These two chapters contain a description of the gates, courts, and buildings which make up what will be the most sacred and glorious place in all the world. From it the power and blessing of God will flow forth to the ends of the earth. Here we have, as it were, the very heart of that golden age, from which will go forth those streams of life which will remove the blight of the curse, make the desert blossom as the rose, and bear to every rank of creation the revivifying touch. A great pæan of praise will rise from the delivered creation thus brought into the liberty of the children of God, when the Firstbegotten shall have been brought again into the world, to whom universal homage shall be paid, His enemies having been made the footstool of His feet.

1. In order of time this is not the last prophecy of Ezekiel, that given in chap. xxix. 17 being two years later (see *Notes*, p. 176). But this great vision is the only one that could fittingly close the book. The glory revealed to the prophet at the beginning, and which he saw a little later leave the defiled temple soon to be laid in ruins, he now sees returning to that greater and more wonderful earthly dwelling-place, spread out before him so that he may describe it to the house of Israel.

In this there is a note of victory. It assures us of God's ultimate victory over evil, apart from which the glory could not return. It teaches us that there is a divine limit to the progress of evil. The tide of wickedness may rise so high as to seem to overwhelm the power of God and administer defeat to Him; but in the end, in the fulness of the time, when all has been accomplished which He had in mind, and which He indeed has been working out through all the turbulent scenes of human sin and strife, He moves to the closing act, the day breaks, the dark shadows of night flee away, and the mastery of His hand over all, even in the darkest hour of the past, is seen as in retrospect, the course of history is reviewed in the light of the glory. What a comfort for faith! How good to know the *living* God! He does not slumber or sleep. He abides faithful, no word of His can fail. "Have faith in God."

This vision was given, Ezekiel says, "In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity." The fact that morally and spiritually it alone fittingly closes his book, though not the last communication given to him, seems to imply that the very year itself in which this vision

on that same day was the [s]hand of Jehovah upon me, and he brought me thither. In the [t]visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very [u]high mountain; and upon it there

[s] ch. 1. 3; 3. 14, 22; 8. 1; 33. 22; 37. 1.
[t] ch. 1. 1; 8 3; 43. 3. 2 Chr. 26. 5. *ctr.* ch. 13. 16, 22.

Jer. 28. 5-17; 29. 31. [u] *cf.* ch. 20. 40-44; ch. 37. 22; Is. 2. 2, 3; Mic. 4. 1; Ps. 48. 1-3; ch. 43. 12.

is given bears a lesson to us. Why the twenty-fifth year? Is it not because as 5x5 it suggests how fully God (1) and the creature (4) are brought together, and this in fivefold power and blessing? Thus the thought is emphasized, intensified, for us; and need we wonder at this when it is the time that the creature shall be delivered from the bond of corruption and be brought into the liberty of the glory? Then with the glory in the land there shall spread to earth's remotest bounds the blessing of Messiah's reign in righteousness, the time when the Son of Man shall sit upon His throne and administer the government which will then rest upon His shoulder.

The time is still more definitely stated as "in the beginning of the year, the tenth of the month." Considering Ezekiel's priestly place, and that the civil year, which was reckoned to begin with the first of the seventh month of the sacred year, was a late innovation among the Jews, having no relation to the divine economy with which the whole order of things here revealed has to do most intimately, it would appear certain that we are to think of that beginning of the year as referring to that spoken of in Exodus in connection with the Passover. This was the beginning of the year according to God's order, and this would be first in the heart and thought of the prophet. Is it not just the light of redemption and deliverance from bondage that we might expect to illumine our entrance upon the glorious vista of earth's golden age, of which this Sanctuary is the spiritual centre? What a word for downtrodden Israel to consider when pondering this book of their captivity prophet! All that that memorable event meant for them is to find its superlative accomplishment in the period to which this vision belongs. Then it is the tenth of the month when the lamb was taken to be kept up to the fourteenth day. This brings into view the blessed Person by whom alone all that is in prospect can be accomplished—Christ, who as a lamb without spot or blemish, has made peace by the blood of His cross; Christ who as the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world; the Lamb who is so prominent in the book of Revelation, in which so much is given as to the circumstances and events relating to the period to which this vision shows the consummation.

Finally, we are told that this vision was given in the 14th year after the city was smitten (see Chronological Chart, *Appendix*), when the temple was burned, and the walls of the city broken down by order of Nebuchadnezzar, but in fulfilment of the divine decree (2 Chron. xxxvi. 11-21). Here again are we not to expect to find some note of comfort? Fourteen (7x2), testimony (2) given to the complete reversal of the ruin, and the bringing in of perfection (7), upon which the dark cloud of failure and ensuing judgment shall never fall again. Well may Haggai, as he looks beyond the insignificant temple of the restoration in his day, seeing as with the eye of God the glory of the Millennial temple, which Ezekiel describes, break out in prophetic ecstasy and say, "For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens,

was as the building of a city, on the south. And he brought me thither, and behold, there was a [v]man whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a cord of flax in his hand, and a

[v] *cf.* ch. 1. 5, 8, 10, 26; 9. 2; 10. 2. Dan. 10. 5, 6. Rev. 1. 15; 2. 18.

and the earth, and the sea, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of Hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith Jehovah of Hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of Hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of Hosts."

Here we may digress, and think of another temple which lies in ruin, the walls of whose separation and protection have been broken down—the house of God which is the Church of the present time. As set up on the earth its history presents a sad spectacle, much of which may be found similar in character to that of Israel, for whatever is committed to the hands of men, though established in perfection at the beginning, suffers the same sorrowful blight. But, blessed be God, His Word teaches us in constantly recurring measure, by precept and example, in type and history, that the cycle must return to perfection, not so much like a circle returning to its beginning on the same level, but as lifted up on the line of perfection to a higher level than the point of beginning, revealing greater glory, from which flashes forth to the universe a knowledge of God not to be apprehended in any other way. So the latter glory of God's "spiritual house" shall be greater than the former, when the Church shall be presented faultless in the presence of God's glory, the temple of eternal praise throughout the generation of the age of ages (Eph. iii. 21). So too with creation—once there was a garden of Eden on the earth, then the earth shall be as the garden; once only one nation knew the blessing of a theocracy, then the whole world shall know it when "Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Jehovah and His name one;" once only part of Israel knew God, then all shall know Him in themselves (Heb. viii. 11, *New Trans.*), for all Israel shall be saved when the Deliverer comes out of Zion. There is a glorious prospect wherever the eye of faith turns to contemplate the mystery of God's will, the consummation of which is the universal gathering into one under the hand of Christ our Saviour and Lord. In Him we have obtained an inheritance. We are His joint-heirs. Truly in the blessing of life and the glory of eternity we receive of *His* fulness, grace upon grace. Wonder of wonders that *we* should be called into the fellowship of God's Son!

The prophet was under the hand of Jehovah, and He brought him to the place of this vision. No other hand, no other guide, could bring him and open his eyes to see what are "the visions of God." It is good to have this assurance of *how* he is brought to see. The divine seal is thus put upon all. They are visions of God, signifying that God is the Giver. It is the genitive of origin, or efficient cause.

The location is definitely given. God brought Ezekiel into the land of Israel. These visions have to do with the whole nation, with the land when in possession of all the tribes, restored, united, blessed, all enemies smitten down, all internal conflict over. The prophet's vantage ground is a very high mountain. This can be no other than Jehovah's "holy mountain, the mountain of the height of Israel,"

measuring reed; and he stood in the gate. And the man said unto me, Son of man, [w]behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine [x]ears, and apply thy [y]heart to all that I show thee; for in order

[w] ch. 44. 5. *cfr.* ch. 8. 5. etc.
[x] ch. 3. 10.
[y] *cf.* Dan. 1. 8; 7. 28; 10. 12. Ps. 119. 36; Prov. 4. 20-22.

where Israel shall serve Him (chap. xx. 40-44). It is that mountain of Jehovah to which all the nations shall flow (Isa.ii. 2, 3), beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, the city of the great King (Ps. xlviii. 1-3).

Question has been raised as to whether what Ezekiel sees is to be taken in a literal or ideal sense. There would be little profit in following the arguments on either side. All is expressly stated to be in vision, yet assuredly it must be a true picture, setting before us that which will be given actuality in all its parts in the time to which these visions belong. Great physical changes are intimately connected with the establishment of the Kingdom.

The prophet's approach is evidently from the north, since what he sees is on the south. It seems that he is brought by the way of the north from which came the great enemies of Israel, the way too by which they were carried into captivity. Now it is the return from all of that, with no ememy any more to swoop down from the north quarters, but judgment having brought in righteousness, a peaceable habitation is found. (Compare Isa. xliii. 6; xlix. 12; Jer. xxxvii. 1-9; xxiii. 7, 8).

Upon the high mountain Ezekiel sees what resembles the building of a city—that is the group of buildings which is described in the following chapters.

The prophet now sees a man standing in the gate, presumably the north gate of the sacred enclosure, for it would seem that he goes from this station with the prophet to the east gate (ver. 6), which is measured first. The man had the appearance of brass. It is the same metal as that used in the tabernacle and Solomon's temple, which is, more correctly, copper. It is familiar to us as the symbol of *strength* (1 Kings iv. 13; Job xl. 18; Judges xvi. 21), *protection* (1 Sam. xvii. 5,6), *unyieldingness* in good or evil (Jer. i: 18; xv. 20; Isa. xlviii. 4), and *judgment* (Lev. xxvi. 19; Deut. xxviii. 23; Micah iv. 13). As it could be highly polished and reflect images it was used for mirrors (Exod. xxxviii. 8). Such mirrors were used to make the laver of the tabernacle which held the water of cleansing for the priests. This last connection links it with the Word of God, of which the water is the well-known type. The characteristics of the copper are found in that Word which endureth forever, which is settled forever in heaven, and cannot be broken but must be all fulfilled, and makes all manifest even as the light, another figure of the Word (1 Pet. i. 25; cxix. 8, 9; John x. 35; Matt. v.18; Heb. iv. 12,13; Ps. cxix. 105). The character of God as a God of holy judgment, unchanging, enduring, and searching, all as revealed in His immutable Word, is the lesson of the copper. And this cannot fail to carry our thoughts to Him who is called the Word of God, who abides the same yesterday, to-day and forever, whose goings forth have been from eternity, and who is both the wisdom and power of God. With Him all the glory of God stands associated, and it is not strange then to find this metal prominent in the visions of God which open this book

> that it might be shown thee art thou brought hither: declare to the house of Israel all that thou seest.

in which also the human form predominates. We find it also in the description of the glorious Person Daniel sees (chap. x. 5, 6), and John later (Rev. i. 15), both presenting the Lord Himself. Added to all this Ezekiel tells us that the glory of Jehovah which he saw returning to the new temple (chap. xliii.) had the appearance of the vision he had previously seen. Thus what the brass, or copper, symbolizes has a prominent place in the manifestation of God's glory.

The man has in his hand a cord of flax and a measuring reed. He is prepared to measure. In fact it is with this labor that he occupies the prophet as he guides him through the courts and around the buildings of the Sanctuary. This work of measurement is prophetically significant. See Zech. ii. and Rev. xi.; Hab. iii. 6. It suggests God's care and interest; every thing relating to His purposes and promises is important. Then it may well signify that God has risen up to take possession; it is the assertion of His title. Every false claim set aside, all that usurped possession removed, all shall be established according to the measure of truth and righteousness.

From ver. 5 we learn that the measuring reed in the man's hand was a reed of *six* cubits, each being a cubit and an handbreadth, which means, if our conclusion is correct (see *Appendix*), a cubit of *four* palms or handbreadths. We have learned that six expresses the thought of the limit imposed by God upon man. It is associated with evil, as in the case of Goliath, the Beast of Rev. xiii., and Nebuchadnezzar's idolatrous image. Yet if it is linked with evil in full manifestation, it is just in this connection we find God overcomes and makes the wrath of man to praise Him. *He* gains the victory. David fells Goliath, and the Son of Man coming in His glory destroys the Beasts and sets up His everlasting kingdom. On the sixth day of Gen. 1 Adam is brought in to subdue and rule over creation, suggesting thoughts of mastery and government. Just such thoughts cluster around this measuring reed of six cubits. When God asserts His title to the earth, destroying those who have destroyed it, it will be in the way this number suggests. But it is by the arm and hand of a Man that this will be accomplished, and *four* (the four handbreadths of the cubit here specified) is the number of man and creation, the Man Christ Jesus, the appointed Heir of all things, the One who will subjugate all things to Himself according to the purpose of God.

The man now addresses the prophet. The visions of God require the concentration of every faculty—the eyes, ears, and inner man are all to be called into exercise. The things of God claim our undivided attention. We yield ourselves imperfectly to the divine requirement, and so fail in spiritual perception and intelligence. God's hand brought His servant into the midst of these wonderful scenes that all that pertained to them might be shown to him by divine guidance, and then he was commissioned to make it known to the house of Israel. This is the way of divine grace. These visions of God have to do with the time when Israel will be brought under the new covenant which is grace, not law. But it is upon this principle that we are now blessed. Out of the land of our captivity to sin and

2 (xl. 5-47): The gates and courts: the precincts and the house.

1 (5-27): The first court: the place of general assemblage.

2. [1]And behold, a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits, of a cubit and a handbreadth each. And he measured the thickness of the building, one reed, and the height, one reed.

And he came unto the gate which looked toward the [z]east, and went up its [a]steps; and he measured the threshold of the gate, one reed broad, even one threshold, one reed broad. And each [b]lodge was one reed long, and one reed broad; and it was five cubits between the lodges; and the threshold of the gate beside the porch of the gate toward the house was one reed. [And he measured the porch of the gate toward the house, one reed.] And he measured the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and its posts, two cubits; and the porch of the gate was toward the house. And the lodges of the gate which was toward the east were three on this side and three on that side: these three were of one measure; and the posts were of one measure on this side and on that.

z ctr. ch. 8. 16; 11. 1-3. *cf.* ch. 10. 19; 11. 23; 43. 1-4.

a vers. 22, 26, 31, 34, 37, 49.

b vers. 10-16; 21 29, 33, 36. *cf.* 1 Kings 14. 28.

Satan the hand of God brings us to the mountain-top of spiritual blessing. He has brought us there to be wholly taken up with our glorious heritage, and then to be ministers of its bounty to others. May our eyes, ears, and hearts be applied to all that the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, is ever ready to make plain to us. It is His delight to take the things of Christ and show them unto us.

2. [1] First of all the prophet beholds a wall on the outside of the house. The lesson of the measuring reed we have already suggested; it seems introduced here rather than in ver. 3 so as to link it with the fact that this encircling wall is one reed high, one reed broad—a reed of *six* cubits, equivalent to 7.2 feet, our measure. We see at once that this wall is not for protection against enemies, it is too low. Its significance is other than that of a bulwark to resist assault. The fundamental idea here expressed is that of separation, the wall teaches that the enclosed space is sanctified, set apart, to Jehovah, and this according to the symbolism of the number six. It preaches the exclusion of all that defiles. This wall is as broad as it is high, being in fact foursquare, for perfect equality in every direction marks the holy requirements of God as to both the separation from and judgment of evil. Seven steps lead up to the outer court level. This may suggest to us that the way of approach to these holy precincts of God's presence must be according to the perfection of Him who declares His character in this wall of separation. He must be sanctified in all those who draw near to Him.

This first court is the place of general assemblage. For worship the people must go within. The wall is too high for any outside

And he measured the breadth of the gate-entry, ten cubits; the length of the gate, thirteen cubits. And there was a border before the lodges of one cubit; and a border of one cubit on the other side; and the lodges were six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side. And he measured the gate from the roof of the lodge to its [opposite] roof, a breadth of five and twenty cubits, entry opposite entry. And he made posts of sixty cubits; and up to the posts was the court of the gate round about. And from the front of the entrance-gate to the front of the porch of the inner gate, fifty cubits. And there were closed* windows to the lodges, and to their posts within the gate round about [them], and likewise to the wall-projections, even windows round about inwards; and on the posts [c]palm-trees.

And he brought me into the outer court, and behold, chambers, and a stone pavement made for the court round about: thirty chambers upon the pavement. And the pavement was by the side of the gates, answering to the length of the gates,

[c] 1 Kings 6. 29, 32, 35. 2 Chr. 3. 5. vers. 22, 26, 31, 34, 37. ch. 41. 18-20, 25, 26.

* Heb., closed, i.e., not opened like ordinary windows. Usually windows were openings filled with lattice-work. Might be rendered "latticed windows."—(J. B.)

to observe what is going on within, and entrance must be in the prescribed way, and as ascending the seven steps of the gate-building. Both the way of our approach to God, and the character which pertains to it, are ordered by Him and must be according to what He is in Himself. This underlies the truth of redemption and all that flows out of it. This outer court, as determined by the various measurements given later, is evidently a square of 500 cubits. In our general observations on this vision attention has been called to the very large place given to *five* as a factor of measurement, and its significance, with that of those numbers in which it occurs, has been considered.

We now come to the east gate, which is really a large building 25 cubits broad by 50 cubits long (*i.e.*, 30 feet by 60 feet). It is described in detail; the other gates conform to it. This gate-building is in several respects the most important of all. It is on the axis of the temple; by it the glory of God enters (chap. xliii.); it is shut and no one permitted to enter it because "Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it;" the Prince is privileged to eat bread in it before Jehovah, but he must enter by the porch and go out by the same way, there is no passing through it (chap. xliv. 1-3). The plan in the Appendix will help us to understand the relation of the several parts of this structure. The arrangement of these gate-buildings with their six guard-chambers appears designed to emphasize the

[even] the lower pavement. And he measured the breadth from the front of the gate of the lower [pavement] to the front of the inner court without, a hundred cubits [as to] the east, and [as to] the north.

And the gate of the outer court which looked northward he measured, its length and its breadth and its lodges, three on this side and three on that, and its posts and its wall-projections; it was after the measure of the former gate: fifty cubits its length, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. And its windows, and its wall-projections, and its palm-trees, were after the measure of the gate which is toward the east; and they went up to it by seven steps, and its wall-projections were before them. And there was a gate to the inner court over against the [other] gate, as to the north [gate], even [so] to the east; and he measured from gate to gate, a hundred cubits.

And he brought me toward the south, and behold, a gate toward the south; and he measured its posts and its wall-projections according to these measures; and there were windows to it, and to its

divine provision to preserve the sanctity of the house. It evidences special care to exclude all that would profane these holy precincts. The careful attention given to detail must impress upon all concerned God's care for the holiness of His dwelling-place, thus reminding the people of their own gross negligence and departure in the past, as a result of which they so wickedly defiled God's house. This is pressed upon them in the ordinances given in chap. xliv. 4-14.

If then the wall speaks of exclusion, limiting entrance to the court by the gate-buildings, they certainly instruct us as to that watchfulness ever necessary to guard against the intrusion of what would defile, or not be according to the requirements of Jehovah. All must answer to the claims of His holiness. By these structural forms He was preaching against those abuses and idolatrous evils which prince and priest had allowed to traverse the court of His house, and even be set up within its walls. It was like saying to them in a parable of stone, "Holiness becometh My house forever."

Only one feature of decoration is mentioned — the palm. It is the symbol of beauty (Song vii. 7); of righteousness, prosperity and fruitfulness (Ps. xcii. 12-14); of salvation and victory (Rev. vii. 9); of kingly glory (John xii. 13); and its extensive use in the first temple identifies it with the kingdom and glory of which Solomon's reign is typical (1 Kings vi. 29, 32, 35; vii. 36; 2 Chron. iii. 5). These are the characteristic features of the Millennial age. Then palm branches were used at the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 40; Neh. viii. 15)—this feast typifies the time of peace and rejoicing which

wall-projections round about, like the other windows; fifty cubits was the length, and five and twenty cubits the breadth. And there were seven steps to go up to it; and its wall-projections were before them; and it had palm trees, one on this side and one on that side, upon its posts. And there was a gate to the inner court toward the south; and he measured from gate to gate toward the south, one hundred cubits.

2 (28-46): The inner Court and its Gateways: the place of separation for priestly service.

2 And he brought me into the inner court by the south gate; and he measured the south gate according to these measures: and its lodges, and its posts, and its wall-projections, according to these measures; and there were windows to it and to its wall-projections round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth twenty-five cubits. And

shall come when our Lord shall have established His kingdom upon earth, and Israel shall come into her possessions, and flourish amid Jehovah's blessings in the land. Its inclusion of the *eighth* day suggests the new beginning under grace, the day of the new covenant in which the nation will then stand and abide forever. The constant, steady growth of the palm tree through all seasons symbolizes constancy, perseverance. Certainly the palm sets forth perfectly the character of the time to which these visions belong, and most suitably adorns these buildings.

This outer court, with its east, north, and south gate-buildings, extends around the temple itself and the altar-court on three sides, and to the west there are additional buildings, with flanking chambers to north and south of the temple, and a gateless wall. In every direction the sanctity of the house is guarded, an arrangement manifestly different from that of the first temple, as Ezekiel xliii. 7, 8 clearly intimates.

Around this court, and abutting the gate-buildings, there is a pavement with chambers, which probably extended from the gate-buildings to the kitchens, or boiling places, situated in each of the corners of the court. No chambers, it would seem, are located on the west side; they are rather ranged along the court wall on the other three sides. These chambers would be for the people when feasting upon their offerings. The word here used for chambers is different from that for the guard-rooms, or lodges, in the gate-buildings. It suggests a rather spacious room. In 1 Sam. ix. 22 it is rendered parlor, a room in which thirty persons could be accommodated at a feast. It is probable that these chambers were arranged in six groups of five each.

We may be little able to interpret many of the details given as to these buildings, but it is noticeable that certain numbers stand out prominently, and these may at least suggest lessons which fit in with the time to which these visions of God unmistakably point.

2 The prophet now enters the inner court by the south gate, and is successively taken to the east and north gates. In connection with

there were wall-projections round about, twenty-five cubits long, and five cubits broad. And its wall-projections were toward the outer court; and there were palm trees upon its posts: and its ascent was [by] eight steps.

And he brought me into the inner court toward the east; and he measured the gate according to these measures; and its lodges, and its posts, and its wall-projections, according to these measures; and there were windows to it and its wall-projections round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth twenty-five cubits. And its wall-projections were toward the outer court; and palm trees were upon its posts, on this side and on that side, and its ascent was [by] eight steps.

And he brought me to the north gate, and he measured it according to these measures: its lodges, its posts, and its wall-projections; and there were windows to it round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth twenty-five cubits. And its posts were toward the outer court; and palm trees were upon its posts, on this side and on that side: and its ascent was [by] eight steps. And there was a chamber and its entry by the posts of the gates; there they washed the burnt offering, and in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering. And at the side without, at the ascent to the entry of the north gate, were two tables; and on the other side, which was at the

the last there is the provision for the work of sacrifice. In addition there are two cells for those having charge of the house and the altar, situated in the court itself, one near the north gate, and one near the south gate.

The gate-buildings are not materially different from those already described. They have eight steps, one more than the others, so that the level of the inner court is the height of these eight steps above that of the outer court. This may be the reason why the pavement of the outer court is referred to as the lower (ver. 18).

Within this inner court the priests performed their service with respect to the altar and the house. The garments in which they ministered within these precincts must be laid aside before they go out to approach the things of the people (xlii. 14).

It seems significant that the work of sacrifice is connected with the northern gate. In Scripture the north is associated with judg-

porch of the gate, were two tables: four tables were on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate—eight tables whereon they slew [the sacrifices] — and at the ascent four tables of hewn stone, of a cubit and a half long, and a cubit and a half broad, and one cubit high; whereon also they laid the instruments with which they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice. And the double hooks of a hand-breadth were fastened round about within; and upon the tables [they put] the flesh of the offering.

And without the inner gate were two chambers in the inner court, one at the side of the north gate, and its front toward the south; the other was at the side of the south gate, the front toward the north. And he said unto me, This chamber whose front is toward the south is for the priests, the [d]keepers of the charge of the house. And the chamber whose front is toward the north is for the priests, the [e]keepers of the charge of the altar. These are the sons of [f]Zadok, those who from among the sons of Levi approach unto Jehovah to minister unto him.

3 (47): The altar: the divine centre.

[3]And he measured the court, one hundred cubits long, and one hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar was before the house.

d Lev. 8. 35. Num. 3. 27–32, 38; 18. 1-15. 1 Chr. 9. 23. 2 Chr. 13. 11.
e ch. 44. 15, 16. Num. 18. 7.
f 1 Chr. 6. 8, 53; 24. 6. 2 Sam. 8. 17. 2 Sam. 15. 24-29. 1 Kings 1. 8, 26, 32, 34; 38, 39. ch. 43. 19; 44. 15; 48. 11.

ment. From that quarter the stroke falls upon both Israel and Judah. The word itself, *tsaphon,* properly means "the hidden," "the dark," and is only used of the north as a quarter gloomy and unknown. The idea of darkness thus associated with it fits well with that of judgment. And in this connection we cannot fail to think of the darkness of Calvary, the outer darkness of eternal doom, and the gloomy darkness in which wicked angels are kept. Darkness, too, is the term used to describe man's state away from God, alienated by wicked works, and darkened in his understanding. Certainly in the moral and spiritual application, it is in relation to the north, speaking symbolically, that we need to learn the truth of sacrifice. Here then at the north gate of the inner court, the court of the altar, we have all provided for the accomplishment of this work, whether it be the burnt-offering, sin-offering, or trespass-offering.

3 We come now to the altar, the actual centre of the whole sacred enclosure,* standing at the centre of the inner court which is measured 100 cubits each way. Details and dimensions of the altar are given later (xliii. 13-17). Here it is mentioned to show its relation to the whole. It is the divine centre upon which every line of approach converges, east, north, and south. It surely stands

* See Appendix.

3 (ch. xl. 48-xli. 4): The house itself into which the visible glory shall enter.

1 (xl. 48, 49): The porch.

3. [1]And he brought me to the [g]porch of the house, and he measured the post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side; and the breadth of the gate, three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side. The length of the porch was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits,* even by the steps whereby they went up to it;† and there were [h]pillars by the posts, one on this side and another on that side.

[g] 1 Kings 6. 3. 2 Chr. 3. 4.

[h] 1 Kings 7, 21.

2 (xli. 1, 2): The holy place.

[2]And he brought me to the temple; and he measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, the breadth of the tent. And the breadth of the entry was ten cubits, and the sides of the entry were five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side; and he measured its length, [i]forty cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits.

[i] 1 Kings 6. 2, 17.

3 (3, 4): The most holy.

[3]And he went inwards and measured the post of the entry, two cubits; and the entry, six cubits, and the breadth of the entry, seven cubits.‡

* The LXX reads "twelve." This seems the most likely measure considering the general symmetry of number and plan, which see.—(J. B.).

† Or, according to the reading of the LXX, "by ten steps they went up to it." If this is correct, as is probably the case, then note the three sets of steps—7 to the outer court, 8 to the inner court, and 10 to the house.—(J. B.).

‡ It seems probable that the LXX is right in considering this measurement to refer to the wall on either side of the entry (see plan).—(J. B.).

as an abiding memorial of Christ and His sacrifice. This is central to all the blessing and glory in which Israel and the nations will participate, as indeed it is in regard to the whole universe (Col. i. 19, 20). It will ever remind those who throng the courts of the Lord's house of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Upon the Mount of Transfiguration His death was the subject of converse. That scene set forth the glory of the kingdom of God come in power, and when it has actually come that death will not be forgotten. The peerless glory which will then invest Him will not hide the truth of that redemption by blood upon which all action in power is based.

In the next sections we have the description of the two courts, each 100 cubits square, in the first of which the house itself is located, and in the second, another building the purpose of which is not stated. Thus there is a series of three squares, each of 100 cubits, following each other toward the west, the first being the court of the altar already considered.

3. Now we are brought to consider what is called the house. This building over all is 60 cubits from north to south, and 100 cubits from east to west, with an open space of 20 cubits on three sides—north,

4 (ch. xli. 5-11): The chambers: the encompassment of divine fulness realized through accomplished creative sovereignty (3x10x3, 90 chambers in all).

And he measured its length, [j]twenty cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits, before the temple; and he said unto me, This is the holy of holies.

4. And he measured the wall of the house, six cubits; and the breadth of [k]the side chambers, four cubits round about the house on every side. And the side chambers were three, chamber over chamber, and thirty in order; and they entered into the wall which belonged to the house for the side chambers round about, that they might have hold; but they had not hold in the wall of the house. And as to the side chambers there was an enlarging and a [l]winding about still upward to the side chambers, for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house; wherefore the breadth of the house was upward; and so one went up from the lower [story] to the upper, by the middle one.

[j] 1 Kings 6. 20. 2 Chr. 3. 8.

[k] 1 Kings 6. 5, 6.

[l] 1 Kings 6. 8.

west, and south. Successively, the porch, the holy place, and the most holy are measured. The plan shows the arrangement along with the surrounding chambers.* We may notice the terms used. The whole building is called "the house," of which the porch is the first part described. The next part is called "the temple," which is 40x20 cubits; this is the holy place. The third compartment is "the holy of holies," 20x20 cubits. Connected with this building are chambers surrounding it in three stories—30 of these to each story, 90 in all.

To the west another building is located, having walls of 5 cubits' thickness, and measuring on the outside 80x100 cubits. The principal measurements are then enumerated (vers. 12-15*a*).

(a)—The house, 100 cubits long.
(b)—The separate place (20 cubits), and the building (80 cubits), total, 100 cubits.
(c)—The breadth of the house, 60 cubits, with the separate place, 20 cubits on each side, making the total breadth at the east end of these two squares 100 cubits.

There follows (vers. 15*b*-26) an account of certain interior features and details of ornamentation.

4. In the temple of Solomon the dimensions are similar. The holy and most holy places are the same size, but the porch was 20x10 cubits, here 20x11, but the LXX gives 12: There too the height was given, but Ezekiel does not mention it. The side chambers are mentioned as five cubits, but Ezekiel specifies four. The account in 1 Kings vi. may help us to better understand the structure of the side chambers. These were in three stories also, and increased in breadth one cubit, the dimensions being 5, 6, and 7 cubits. This means that the wall of the house receded with each story, so forming a resting-

* See Appendix.

And I saw that the house had elevation round about: the foundations of the side chambers were a [m]full reed of six cubits to the junction. The thickness of the wall, which was for the side chambers without, was five cubits, as also what was left free along the building of the side chambers that belonged to the house. And between the chambers was a width of twenty cubits round about the house on every side. And the entrance of the side chambers was toward what was left free, one entrance toward the north, and another entrance toward the south; and the width of the space that was left was five cubits round about.

m ch. 40. 5.

place for the floor beams, these beams not being let into the wall but bearing upon the ledge of one cubit formed by the receding wall. It is noticeable that no wall thicknesses are given in Kings or Chronicles. On the other hand the rich embellishment of Solomon's temple is dwelt upon, its gold and precious stones; but of such details Ezekiel makes no mention, in fact the only material referred to is wood. This seems to indicate that at least one purpose is to impress upon us the massiveness and stability of these structures, rather than beauty of detail and adornment, while the arrangement of courts—increasing in height from the level beyond the outer court to the level of the house, and these courts with their gates so surrounding the Sanctuary as to guard it from all contamination with what was common, or would defile—seems designed to enforce the rebuke and admonition given in chap. xliii. 1-12.

Perhaps the dimensions themselves may yield us some helpful lesson. Five and ten appear as basic numbers in so many of the measurements, often intensified by the use of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, that the general lesson seems to be that of divine sufficiency (1) identified for blessing with creature weakness (4), in the full accomplishment of every divine requirement (10). This will be manifest in the kingdom and glory. Practically all the digits by which all numbers are expressed are used in varying relations throughout this complex of buildings, suggesting how that day will be characterized by divine measure ruling in the most far-reaching manner. But in no instance is eleven used as a factor. Twelve appears in the measure of the altar, and is a factor in certain measures noticed a little later. Here we may find it in the breadth of the house, which is, including the free space on each side, 60 (5x12) cubits, but this may be also 6x10. All the multiples and the sums found by adding the measurement of different parts together are divisible by five or ten. There are no uneven multiples, or such as would leave a fraction when divided. All produces the sense of evenness, unity, harmony, stability, and so in the moral sense equity, righteousness, peace, sanctification, amid which the service and worship of Jehovah is carried out and the divine government exercised. As we consider these things and their spiritual import we understand why, "Many peoples shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways,

5 (ch. xli. 12-14): The separate place: God in government, maintaining holiness, according to the fulness of the divine measure (10x10).

5. And the [n]building that was before the [o]separate place at the end toward the west was seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick round about, and its length ninety cubits. And he measured the house, the length one hundred cubits; and the separate place, and the building, and its walls, the length one hundred cubits, and the breadth of the front of the house, and of the separate places toward the east, one hundred cubits. And he measured the length of the building before the separate place, which was at the back of it, and the galleries on the one side and on the other side, one hundred cubits.

n ver. 13.
o vers. 13, 15. ch. 42. 1, 10, 13.

and we will walk in His paths." The city of that day is, as Ezekiel shows us, a part of the great oblation, and Isaiah lx. is a wonderful description of it. The house, too, is spoken of, "I will beautify the house of My magnificence" (ver. 7).

From the level of the inner court the house with its encompassing chambers is elevated a full reed of six cubits. To reach this higher level there seems to have been 10 steps, if the reading of the LXX is accepted. Thus seven steps led up to the outer court, eight to the inner court, and ten to the house. This suggests perfection in new covenant relation according to the fulness of divine requirements—in all 25 steps (5x5) in *three* sets, the latter speaking of full manifestation according to the power of the Spirit and the truth of resurrection.

5. The house is surrounded on three sides—north, west, south—by what is called the separate place, a space of 20 cubits, making three sections of court each measuring 100x20, and so having an area of 2,000 square cubits, or a total of 6,000. The extreme measurement of the house is 60x100, or the same total area of 6,000. This makes a total for this part of the sacred enclosure of 12,000 square cubits, which equals 12x10x10x10. Here we observe how 12 appears as an important factor; and the frequent use of three, which enters into six and twelve, and of ten, whether in multiplication or addition, is worthy of notice. They appear in these areal measurements, in the number of chambers in the outer court (30), in those surrounding the house (30 in each of the three stories), and in the three successive squares of 100 cubits each, equalling 300x100. Then in the area of each of these we have a *fourfold* use of ten, the area being 10,000 square cubits or 10x10x10x10, and this repeated *three* times. Thus we find three multiplied by two or four, giving us six or twelve, intensified by ten used once, twice, thrice, or in fourfold power. These basic numbers in their multiplied form cannot fail to impress any one who has given a little attention to their significance in Scripture. They teach us how divine fulness in complete manifestation (3) is exercised in government (12) according to every requirement Godward and manward (10), and this in realized victory over evil (6), as a result of which the Creator and His creature are brought together under the administration of Christ into harmonious relation to the praise of His glory (5). This general lesson

6 (15-26): Interior details and ornamentation: symbolic of Messianic triumph.
1 (15-21): General character; all established by measure in glory and righteousness.

6. [1]And the inner temple and the porches of the court, [p]the thresholds, and the closed [q]windows, and the galleries round about the three of them (opposite the thresholds it was wainscoted with wood round about, and from the ground up to the windows, and the windows were covered), [and] above, over the entry, even unto the inner house, and without, by all the wall round about, within and without, [all was] by measure. And it was made with [r]cherubim and [s]palm trees; and a palm

p *cf.* Is. 6. 4.
q ver 25. ch. 40. 16.
r vers. 20. 25. 1 Kings 6. 29. 2 Chr. 3. 7-14. *cf.* Ex. 25. 18-22. 1 Kings 6. 23-35. 2 Kings 19. 15. Ps. 80. 1; 99. 1. Isa. 37. 16. ch. 10. Heb. 9. 5.
s *cf.* Lev. 23. 40; Neh. 8. 15; Ps. 92. 12; Jer. 10. 5; John 12. 13. *ctr.* Joel 1. 12.

appears stamped upon this whole arrangement. All is measured and ordered to set forth divine perfection, the basis of which is the reed of six cubits of four handbreadths each, making in all 24, or 12x2, for it will be the full testimony (2) to the perfection and order of divine government (12) set up on the earth, and this under the hand of man—the Man Christ Jesus. "All was by measure."

6. [1]As to the interior we are told of it being wainscoted with wood, ornamented with cherubim and palm trees, alternating, and each cherub having the face of a man and the face of a young lion. The significance of the palm tree we have already considered. This is now combined with the symbolism of the cherubim. Both are evenly distributed; there is perfect balance, symmetry rules throughout. From the scriptures in which the cherubim are mentioned they appear as "supports or guardians of the throne of God in His absolute righteousness and judgment," and "seem clearly to represent the divine attributes of righteousness and its execution in judgment, which is the basis of all true government, human or divine, the only guarantee of the stability of that which is beneath its sway. The throne of iniquity can have no fellowship with the God of righteous judgment (Ps. xciv. 20). Therefore God will overturn until the righteous Ruler comes who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity (Ezek. xxi. 27; Ps. xlv. 6, 7). Such a throne can alone be 'forever and ever;' and this Ruler is the Melchizedek, 'King of righteousness and King of peace,' David's Son and yet his Lord, who sits at God's right hand till His enemies are made His footstool (Ps. cx. 1, 2). In view of such a Ruler the people may well tremble and bow in heart to Him in the day of His grace ere His judgment fall; and yet when He takes His power to reign, the earth shall rejoice and be glad. For Him His whole creation waits in hope, for then will the children of God be manifested in their liberty of glory and creation be delivered from its present bondage" (Rom. viii. 21, 22). The living creatures of the earlier vision of God's majesty and glory are called cherubim in chapter x., and there too we see them associated with the work of Judgment. But while there they have four faces, here in the sanctuary only two are mentioned, those of the ox and eagle being omitted. This emphasizes the lesson of the other two, that of the man suggesting intelligence combined with all the tender and gracious affections of human nature to which the face is the index by means of both look, word, and feature; and that of the lion denoting majesty of bearing, fearless and irresistible in authority and power. These features will characterize the government of God in

tree was between cherub and cherub; and the cherub had two faces: the [t]face of a man was toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side; [so] was it made upon all the house round about. From the ground unto above the entry were cherubim and palm trees made, and [on] the wall of the temple. As for the temple, the door-posts were square; and the front of the sanctuary had the same appearance.

[t] ch. 1. 10.

2 (22): Fellowship.

[2] The altar was of wood, three cubits high, and its length, two cubits; and its corners, and its length, and its walls were of wood: and he said unto me, This is the [u]table which is before Jehovah.

[u] ch. 44. 16. Mal. 1. 7, 12.

the day of the kingdom and glory, and surely they find there superlative manifestation in Him who then will rule—in Him who is both the Man Christ Jesus and the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

[2] The altar of wood, called "the table which is before Jehovah," seems from this to have been placed on the central axis of the temple, and so in line with the doors of the holy of holies, the dwelling-place of the glory soon to enter. Of this only two dimensions are given, the height three cubits, the length two cubits, although the LXX adds that it was two broad, making it foursquare. This makes it appear quite different from the table of showbread in the tabernacle. It seems to be more like the golden altar of incense, both as to its form and location, yet the difference is very evident in that wood is the only material mentioned, and it is called a table as well as an altar. Little can we say about this, except that the thoughts of worship and communion combine in this the only article of furniture mentioned. The fact that it is only wood prohibits the actual offering of sacrifice such as the burning of incense, and nothing is said of bread being placed upon it. Perhaps its dimensions may afford a lesson. By comparison it is *four* times the area of the altar of incense made for the tabernacle, and twice that of the table, being also twice its height; the altar was two cubits high, this altar-table is three. Three is the number of full manifestation, of the Trinity, and particularly of the Spirit, and of resurrection; two is the number of testimony and communion, in both of which what three speaks of is revealed and enjoyed. These precious thoughts are combined as it were in this altar-table, and if we are permitted to link with it the altar and table of the tabernacle, then all that it speaks of centres in the perfection and fragrance of Christ—His Person, work, and the results, as found in life, fellowship, and acceptance—all as set forth in the incense and the bread of presence; and furthermore all of this found in manifest union, only in intensified form, as the enlarged dimensions may indicate, in the day of the kingdom and glory. It will be the dispensation of the fulness of time when all shall be gathered together in one under Christ to enjoy the accomplished reconciliation of all things, even the things on earth and in heaven. They will then be reconciled in manifest glory to the fulness of the Godhead, resting as this does and ever will be seen to

3 (23-26); The manner of entrance.

3And the temple and the sanctuary had two [v]doors. And the doors had two leaves, two turning leaves; two for the one door, and two leaves for the other. And there were made upon them, on the doors of the temple, cherubim and palm trees, as there were made upon the walls; and

[v] 1 Kings 6. 31-35.

do, upon the work of the sacrifice whose abiding memorial will be seen in the great altar which stands at the very centre of this Millennial Sanctuary. It will be the day pictured for us in Ps. xcvi.-c., and also in the Hallelujah psalms cxlvi.—cl. Compare Isa. xxxii. 15-18; xxxiii. 5, 6, 20-22; xxxv. 1, 2; xli. 17-20; lv. 12, 13.

It is hardly possible to pass without notice that with all the detailed description of arrangement and measure here given, there is no mention made of many features prominent in the first temple and the tabernacle. At once we think of the candlestick, incense altar, veil, ark, censer, and all the many related vessels of service, with the wealth of spiritual instruction they afford. No mention is made of brazen sea nor laver, nor do we read of the lavish use of gold, as in the house built by Solomon. When we consider that Moses received the pattern of the tabernacle from God (Exod. xxv. 8, 9), and that the pattern of all the house and its furnishings David "had by the Spirit," by Jehovah's hand upon him "instructing as to all the work of the pattern" (1 Chron. xxviii., 11, 12, 19, *New Trans.*), the omission of so much in Ezekiel's vision cannot fail to impress us. Though we may be little able to explain it, this difference serves to bring out into greater prominence what we have considered the chief lesson of this vision, in view of Ezekiel's earlier prophecies and the several rebukes given in the final chapters.

3 The prophet turns to look at the doors of the temple and sanctuary. The brief description is sufficient to show that they are similar to those of Solomon's temple (1 Kings vi. 31-35), but here seemingly it is not so much the doors themselves which are of importance as the relation in which we find them. The altar-table just described being on the central axis of the temple, the prophet now notices the doors of both parts of the house, in direct line with it. Across this line of approach to the presence of the Glory, soon to be seen entering the inner chamber, lies this altar-table with its combined lesson, if we have read it aright, of worship and communion. The only station for such holy service is in direct line with the opened Sanctuary. Through its unfolded doors the outshining light of the indwelling Glory would illuminate the altar-table, and shed forth its rays along the central line of its abode, passing through the doors at the porch to fall upon the great altar—"the hearth of God." As we think of what is associated with this manifestation of the Divine Presence in the kingdom and glory, how fitting to be reminded of the cherubim and palm trees, whose meaning we have already considered!

But why are there doors? May they not witness to God's absolute right to shut out from His presence, if occasion require? There are two doors to each opening, and evidently two turning, or folding, leaves to each door. Thus the numbers *two* and *four* appear, and they may speak of witness-bearing toward the creation, and such a witness as the carved cherubim and palm trees indicate. The truth

there was a wooden portal in front of the porch without. And there were closed windows and palm trees on the one side, and on the other side, on the sides of the porch: thus were the side chambers of the house and the portals.

to which they witness orders, controls, as it were, the way of approach to the Divine Presence. And though the service and privilege of entering the house pertain only to the priestly family, the lessons of its parts and arrangements are not only for their instruction, but that the people themselves may know Jehovah as thus revealed (chap. xliv. 23).

But may we not also think of Christ in this connection? The figure of the door He applies to Himself, as we know. By Him there is entrance into full salvation. He, as having become Man, is the abiding witness of all that the cherubim and palm tree symbolize, and to all creation, to which He stands as Firstborn and the Image of the invisible God. Only by Him is there access to the altar-table and the indwelling Glory. He may give access, or be as a closed door shutting out forever. He may be the Saviour or the Judge, for to Him has been committed all in relation to salvation and judgment.

A brief reference to the porch calls attention to its portal (or threshold), its windows, and the decoration, which in this case, as in that of other surrounding chambers (chap. xl. 16), was simply the palm tree. The cherubim is rather associated with the house itself, and the interior in particular. There is an alternative rendering, not without good authority, for the latter part of ver. 25—"And there were wooden planks upon the front of the porch without." If this is accepted the close of ver. 26 should read, "and the planks," instead of, "and the portals." These planks would then also have palm trees carved upon them as upon the surrounding walls—work which would all be in low relief. Thus the approach to the outer doors of the house would be over these carved planks. The word here rendered "wooden planks" is the one used where death by hanging on a *tree* is mentioned (Gen. xl. 19; Deut. xxi. 22; Josh. x. 26; Esther ii. 23; v. 14). Moreover, it is by the tree cut down and fashioned to the proper form that this path of approach to the doors is made. Is it too much to draw from this a suggestion of the Cross? By it indeed, in any case, the way has been made, whether for us or Israel, by which access is possible. It introduces, as it were, to that path upon which falls the light from the opened Sanctuary. And where more than in the Cross is manifested the symbolic meaning of the palm tree, both to the glory of God and the blessing of the whole creation!

Before leaving this section let us revert for a moment to some of the dimensions of the house, in particular those of the three entrances which the plan shows to be as follows:

Porch entrance, ...	14	cubits	=7x2.
Temple entrance, ...	10	"	=5x2.
Entrance to the Holy of Holies,....	6	"	=3x2.

Two the number of testimony and fellowship, and distinctly of Christ Himself as the second Person of the holy Trinity, rules throughout in this threefold entrance to the place of the divine glory.

Section 2 (Chap. xlii.).

The arrangements provided to preserve the service of the Sanctuary in separation from defilement

1 (1-12): The chambers before the separate place.

1. And he brought me forth unto the [w]outer court, the way toward the north; and he brought me to the chambers that were over against the [x]separate place, and which were over against the building, toward the north, before the length of the one hundred cubits; the entry was on the north, and the breadth was fifty cubits over against the [y]twenty cubits that belonged to the inner court, and over against the [z]pavement that belonged to

[w] ch. 40. 17.
[x] vers. 10, 13. ch. 41. 12.
[y] ch. 41. 10.
[z] ch. 40. 17, 18.

As *three*fold it implies fulness, and this as found manifested in what 7, 5, and 3 teach us, and that is perfection, but this found in the grace which has effected the union of the Creator and the creature (4+1), and this in relation to the fulness of the Godhead itself (3). And let us remember that what leads up to this from the court in which the great altar of sacrifice stands is a flight of *ten* steps, signifying—shall we not say?—that every requirement of the divine righteousness both Godward and manward has been perfectly met, and this, as we know, in the Person and work of Him of whom that very altar perpetually speaks—CHRIST. I may remark too that if the plan of the house is examined* it will be found that the wall-posts of these entrances are in this same fundamental ratio, only in reverse order, that is 3, 5, 7. Again in the dimensions of the Porch, Holy Place, and Most Holy we see how *two* rules with *ten* as the number multiplied, as also in the open space of 20 cubits which surrounds this structure. One more feature which gives prominence to the house with its side chambers is the foundation upon which it rests, which is "a full reed of six cubits" above the level of the surrounding court including that of the altar, and projects five cubits from the outside walls of the building (see *Appendix*). Six, as the number which speaks of the divine limit to evil, and of mastery over it, and of the subjugation of all things to God, is the fitting measure for the foundation of His house of glory. Notice too that it says a *full* reed; there will be no coming short in what this measure of six cubits means. And it extends out *five* cubits all around the house, for all is realized in the blessedness of that grace which reigning through righteousness brings God and man together to share in and enjoy the triumph and the fruits of the old Serpent being smitten, his head crushed by the blessed and glorious Man whose heel he in malice and enmity had bruised at the Cross. How heaven and earth will sing His triumph! The redeemed creation will join as one to adore the Lamb.

Sec. 2.

1. Two cell buildings are now described. They are located on the north and south sides of the separate place, and are three stories high. Again the familiar factors, 3, 5, and 10, are prominent in the measurements.

* See Appendix.

the outer court; there was gallery against gallery in the third [story]. And before the chambers was a walk of ten cubits in breadth, and a way of one hundred cubits inward; and their entries were toward the north. And the upper chambers were shorter than the lower (for the galleries encroached upon them), and than the middlemost of the building. For they were in three [stories] and had not pillars as the pillars of the courts; therefore [the third story] was straitened more than the lowest and the middlemost from the ground. And the wall that was without, answering to the cells toward the outer court in front of the chambers, its length was fifty cubits: for the length of the chambers that were against the outer court was fifty cubits; and lo, before the [a]temple, it was one hundred cubits. And under these chambers was the entry from the east as one goeth unto them from the outer court.

[a] ch. 41. 1, etc.

In the breadth of the wall of the court toward the south, before the separate place, and before the building, were chambers; and a passage before them, like the appearance of the chambers that were toward the north, according to their length, according to their breadth, and all their goings out, and according to their fashions, and according to their doors. And according to the doors of the chambers that were toward the south there was a door at the head of the way, [even] the way directly before the wall toward the east as one entereth into them.

2 (13, 14) The purposes served by these chambers

2. And he said unto me, The north chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate

2. The special purposes of these buildings are then stated. They are called holy; in them the priests eat the most holy things; to them is brought the priests' portion of the offerings; then after entering into the holy place the priests must only pass out by going through these buildings. In them they change their garments, laying aside the holy linen in which they minister in the inner court or the house before going into the outer court to the people (ver. 14; xliv. 17-19). This is to avoid hallowing the people with their garments. The details of the sacrifice and the ordinances as to priestly service will occupy us later. Here the point is that all must be kept in its proper separation from all contact with the common, thus insisting upon the essential holiness of all pertaining to the inner courts, temple buildings, and priestly place.

place, they are holy chambers, where the [b]priests that come near to Jehovah shall [c]eat the most holy things; there shall they lay the most holy things, and the [d]meal offering, and the [e]sin offering and the [f]trespass offering; for the place is holy. When the priests enter in, then shall they not go out from the holy place unto the outer court, but there they shall [g]lay their garments wherein they minister, for they are holy: and they shall put on other garments, and shall approach to that which is for the people.

3 (15-20) The established separation of the whole sacred enclosure

3. And when he had made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth by way of the gate whose front was toward the east, and measured it* round about. He measured the east side with a measuring reed, five hundred reeds with a measuring reed round about. He measured the north side, five hundred reeds with a measuring reed round about. He measured the south side, five hundred reeds with a measuring reed. He turned about to the west, and measured five hundred reeds with a measuring reed. He measured it on the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred long, and five hundred broad, to make a [h]separation between that which was holy and that which was common.

b ch. 40. 46.
c Lev. 6. 16, 26; 10. 13; 24. 9. ch. 44. 29.
d Lev. 2. 3, 10; 6. 14-18; 7. 9; 10. 12, 13. Num. 18. 9, 10.
e Lev. 6. 17, 18. 25-30; 7. 1-7; 10. 17, 18.
f Lev. 6. 17, 18; 7. 1, 6.
g ch. 44. 19.
h ch. 22. 26; 44. 23; 48. 15. cf. Lev. 10. 10; 20. 22-26. Ezra 9. 1-3. Ex. 33. 7-11. Num. 6. 2 Cor. 6. 14-18 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17; 6. 19, 20.

* Not the gate itself, as the following dimensions show, but the enclosure, or with the LXX, "the plan of the house." This measurement appears to be along the wall referred to in chap. 40: 5.—(J. B.).

3. Finally, after all of the inner house has been measured, the prophet is brought out by way of the east gate and into a large space, four-square, of 500 reeds on each side, enclosed with a wall of which the dimensions are not given. This appears as the extreme outer line of separation "between that which is holy and that which was common." This would form a great square of 3,000 cubits, in the centre of which would be the Sanctuary square of 500 cubits.

This whole concept presents a rebuke to and correction of the laxity and loss of the just consciousness of the great difference between Jehovah and Israel. The prophet shows this was entirely absent from the life of the nation, so that rulers and people had violated the sanctity of the temple, even introducing idolatrous worship. They had grievously failed to maintain His holiness in separation from evil. By these courts and gates, and wide open spaces which surround them, Jehovah is signifying by concrete example the truth of His surpassing glory, absolute pre-eminence, and essential holiness.

Section 3 (Chap. xliii.).

The glory of Jehovah filling the house

1 (1-12): The place of the throne, glorious in majesty and holiness

1 (1-6): The glory itself

1. [1]And he brought me to the gate, [i]the gate which looketh toward the east: and behold, the [j]glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and his [k]voice was like the voice of many waters; and [l]the earth was lighted with his glory. And the appearance of the vision that I saw was according to the vision that I had seen when I came [m]to destroy the city; and the visions were like the vision that I saw [n]by the river Chebar, and I fell upon my face. And the glory of Jehovah came into the house by the way of the gate whose front is toward the east. And [o]the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of Jehovah [p]filled the house. And I heard one speaking unto me out of the house, and [q]a man stood by me.

2 (7-11): The seat of government

[2]And he said unto me, Son of man, [this is] the place of my throne, and [r]the place of the

[i] ch. 10. 19; 40. 32, 44; 43. 1; 44. 1; 45. 19; 46. 1, 12.
[j] vers. 4, 5. ch. 1. 28; 3. 23; 8. 4; 9. 3; 10. 4, 18, 19; 11. 22, 23; 44 4. Ex. 16. 7, 10; 24. 16, 17; 40. 34. Deut. 5. 24. 1 Kings 8. 11. 2 Chr. 5. 14; 7. 1-3. Ps 138. 5. Isa. 6. 1-4. Zech. 2. 5. *cf.* Ps. 8. 1; 148. 13; 138. 5. Isa. 28. 5, 6; 35. 1-10; 40. 3-5, with Matt. 3. 3; 4. 1; 16. 28; 17. 8; 2 Pet. 1. 16-18. Hag. 2. 3 9. *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 21. Ps. 106. 19, 20. Isa. 3. 8. Jer. 2. 11-13; 14. 20-22.

k ch. 1. 24; 25. 28; 10. 5; Ps. 29. 3-5, 7-11. Rev. 1 15; 10. 1-3; *cf.* Ex. 19. 19; Deut. 4. 12, 33, 36; 5. 22-26; Job 37. 2-5; 40. 9; Dan. 4. 31; 10. 6. *l* Rev. 18. 1; Ps. 80. 1; 72. 19; Num. 14. 21; *cf.* Isa. 2. 5; 60. 1, 3, 19, 20; Dan. 2, 35; Hab. 2. 14; Isa. 11. 9; Matt. 24. 27, 30 with Lk. 9. 26. *m* ch. 9. *n* ch. 1. 3; 3. 23; 10. 15, 20, 22. *o* ch. 3. 12, 14; 8. 3; 11. 1, 24. *p* ch. 44. 4; Ex. 40. 35; 1 Kings 8. 10, 11; Hag. 2. 6-9; Mal. 3. 1-3. *q* ch. 40. 3; *cf.* ch. 1. 26; Dan. 7. 13; 2. 25: Gen. 18. 2, 13, 17. *r cf.* 1 Chr. 28. 2; Ps. 99. 5; 132. 7; Isa. 60. 13; Lam. 2. 1.

Sec. 3.

1. [1]The house and its holy precincts having been viewed in their entirety, the prophet is now called to see that which alone can give character to the whole—the entrance of the divine glory. He is brought to the east gate. In his earlier visions he had beheld the glory of God leave the defiled temple by way of the east gate, and take its stand upon the mountain which is on the east of the city—the Mount of Olives (chap. xi. 22-25). He who is the perfect and eternal embodiment of all that this vision of glory sets forth symbolically also left the house of His day desolate, and as He sat on the Mount of Olives, looking over the rejected city, He unfolded the course of future events until the day when He shall stand upon that same mount on the east, bringing the glorious dawn of that day which shall be ever bright with the light and healing of the Sun of Righteousness (Matt. xxiv.; Zech. xiv.).

Along the path of exit the glory now returns to fill the house. It is "the glory of the God of Israel...and the glory of Jehovah." Then all that those Names mean shall be found fully accomplished—Israel one nation, new born in fellowship with the Eternal, according to the new covenant, and in the power and blessing of the outpoured Spirit.

[2] Of old the cherubim were set and the flame of the flashing sword, east of Eden, to guard the way of the tree of life. Curse had come,

soles of my feet, [s]where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever; and the house of Israel shall [t]no more defile my holy name, they, nor their kings, with their fornication, and with the carcases of their kings in their high places, in their setting their threshold by my threshold, and their post by my post, and there was [but] the wall between me and them; and they [u]defiled my holy name with their abominations which they committed; and I consumed them in mine anger. Now let them put away their fornication, and the carcases of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst

s ver. 9. ch. 37. 26-28; *cf.* Ex. 15. 17, 1-8; 25. 8; 29. 45, 46; Lev 26.3-13; Deut. 12. 10, 11; 33. 12, 28, 29. 1 Kings 6. 13; 8. 12, 13, 27. Ps. 68. 16; 85. 9; 132. 13-18. Isa. 57. 15. Joel 3. 17. Zech. 2. 10, 11; 8. 3-8. *cfr.* Ps. 90. 1. 1 Kings 8. 30, 39, 43, 49. 2 Chr. 6. 30. Ps. 113. 5.
t ch. 20. 39-44.

ch. 39. 7. *u* ch. 5. 11; 8. 3, 16; 23. 37-39; 44. 6-8; 2 Kings 23. 4-14; *cf.* Lev. 26. 30; 2 Kings 16. 10-15; 21. 3-7; Jer. 16. 18; 2 Chr. 36. 14.

none could claim right to life; from God alone could it come. Only in the place of His presence could it be found, but inexorable righteousness, inflexible holiness, and incontrovertible judgment stood guard. He who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"—the Tree of Life—bowed His blessed head to bear all and answer to all required by the divine glory, that the way might be opened to the poor sinner who draws near in the value of His precious blood. Now in the glory supported by the cherubim our attention is called to the figure of a Man. There indeed He ever was as foreknown before all ages, and so He is seen in the visions of God before the time of manifestation had come. This is one of the many foreshadows of the Incarnation, but now we know that He has actually appeared. Henceforth He, not apart from, but as identified with, all that the cherubim symbolize, stands at the very entrance of life, and He is ever found all along the way as He is its glorious and eternal end—"Christ our life."

Of old the cherubim stood at the closed Garden of delight, and looked out on a cursed earth and a fallen race, but in the day of Ezekiel's vision they shall bear the divine glory into its earthly resting-place (ver. 7), to look out upon an earth from every part of which the joyful song of deliverance shall be rising, every note blending and uniting in one universal Hallelujah.

No wonder the light of Jehovah's glory shone forth to announce the birth at Bethlehem, and that out of the midst of its brightness the angelic choir chanted its anthem of glory and pleasure over the Child born and the Son given upon whose shoulder the government shall be, and whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace, the increase of whose government and peace shall never end, upholding all with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. Again that glory invests Him on the holy mount; as a cloud it receives Him ascending from Olivet; in it He shall come with all the holy angels to take His kingdom; and of the heavenly city, enlightened with the glory of God, He, the Lamb, is the Lamp.

God comes in this glory, with majesty and awe-inspiring utterance, and with light reaching to earth's remotest bounds. The prophet

of them forever. Thou, son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be confounded at their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they be confounded at all that they have done, make known to them the form of the house, and its fashion, and its goings out, and its comings in, and all its forms, and all its statutes, yea, all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof; and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the statutes thereof, and do them.

assures us that he is seeing again the vision which appeared by the river Chebar (chap. 1; see notes), in the presence of which then and now he falls prostrate. Brought into the inner court, he sees that the Glory fills the house. Then he is personally addressed by some one speaking before the house, and he finds a man standing beside him. The Glory, majestic in appearance, mighty in speech, far reaching in its effect, has been seen to enter the Sanctuary, and now in the familiar accents of human speech Jehovah communicates His word. He speaks first of rest, and that forever in the midst of His redeemed earthly people. What He had said to Solomon after the dedication of the first house had been fulfilled in Israel's long history of shameful departure, scattering, and judgment, yet it was also true as then declared that His eyes and heart were perpetually upon that house, the place of the soles of His feet, and the returning Glory proves that He abides faithful.

Rest can only be realized where *He* sets up His throne. The curse comes to Satan, to angel, to man by defiance of its holy claim, by resisting the righteous rule of an ever-loving, wise, holy and glorious Creator. The blessing of every creature is found only in submission, and if this is not accomplished through grace it must be through power, the Shepherd's rod must become the rod of iron.

If the throne suggests the divine government as connected with the indwelling glory, the expression, "the place of the soles of My feet," introduces the thought of worship (Ps. xcix. 5; cxxxii. 7). In that day there will be no other throne-house in Israel. The Prince of whom we read later evidently does not occupy the same position as former kings. They had assumed absolute right to the throne, and had acted in shameful disregard of Jehovah's revealed will. Instead of acting as Jehovah's vicegerents, they had practically ignored His supremacy, neglected or rejected His Word, and made their own will paramount. In this evil course they were followed by the people and the priesthood. Idolatry came to prevail throughout the land, and even invaded the temple precincts, defiling the house itself. When the time of Ezekiel's vision has come, all such conditions will have passed forever. This change is declared to the prophet. Neither the people nor their kings will defile Jehovah's holy name any more. Because of their abominations (compare 2 Kings xvi. 14, 15; xxi. 4-7; xxiii. 11, 12; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 4-7) His anger had consumed them; but then Israel's time of suffering will be accomplished, her iniquity will be pardoned, having received double for all her sins (Isa. xl. 1, 2).

3 (12) The mount of holiness

2 (13-17) The place of sacrifice

3 This is the law of the house: upon the top
of the mountain, all its border round about is
most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.
2. And these are the measures of the altar in cubits:
the cubit is a cubit and a handbreadth. The bot-
tom was a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and its
border on the edge thereof round about, one span:
and this was the base of the altar. And from
the bottom upon the ground to the lower ledge
was two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and
from the small ledge to the great ledge, four
cubits, and the breadth one cubit. And the upper
altar was four cubits; and from the hearth of God
and upward were four horns, and the hearth of God
was twelve [cubits] long, by twelve broad, square
in the four sides thereof. And the ledge was four-
teen [cubits] long by fourteen broad in the four
sides thereof, and the border about it half a cubit;
and the bottom thereof a cubit round about: and
its steps looked toward the east.

Israel as a nation new born, upon whom the Spirit has been poured out, will dwell safely under the shadow of the Almighty. With the majesty of the glory will be the beauty of holiness. So the purgation of ver. 9 is essential to Jehovah's dwelling in the midst of them.

3 This lesson may be learned from the vision of the house (vers. 10, 11). It is sealed by the law of the house which decrees the whole limit of the top of the mountain to be most holy (ver. 12).

2. We pass from the vision of the entering glory of Jehovah to consider the detailed measure of the altar, which stood at the centre of the whole enclosure, and directly before the house. God looks out, as it were, from the place of His rest upon that which presents the basis of all blessing and glory—the place of sacrifice. It stands as a memorial bearing witness to Christ. He is the true Burnt Offering, whose sacrifice of perpetual efficacy is being recalled by every offering presented upon this altar.

Not all is perfectly clear as to its construction. It appears to be two cubits higher than that of the first temple, and eight cubits less in length and breadth. Ezekiel's altar is 12x12 cubits.* Its principal dimensions are 18, 16, 14, and 12 cubits. The one common divisor of these numbers is *two*, which, as often remarked, speaks of competent witness, fellowship, and particularly of Christ. Dividing the measurements we obtain the numbers 9, 8, 7, and 6. Thus we have the complex idea of fullest manifestation (9=3x3) in the power of the Spirit and the glory of resurrection (3); and this in new covenant, new creation relations (8) into which all creation (4) will then be brought, according to perfection and rest (7), crowned of necessity with mastery over evil (6). This last is the

* See Outline Elevation of Altar. Appendix.

3 (18-27) The place of worship

3. And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to [v]sprinkle blood thereon. Thou shalt give to the priests, the Levites, that are of the seed of Zadok, who come near unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord Jehovah, a [w]young bullock for a sin offering. And thou shalt take of its blood, and put upon the four horns thereof, and on the four corners of the ledge, and upon the border round about: so shalt thou cleanse it and make atonement for it. And

[v] Lev. 1. 5.

[w] Ex. 29. 10, 14. Lev. 8. 14, 15. ch. 45. 18-20.

topmost part of the structure, and it is foursquare, 12 cubits each side (4x3)—the number of divine government exercised throughout creation according to the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ, to which fulness all things in heaven and on earth are reconciled in the power of the blood of the cross by which peace has been made. Such seems to be the lesson of the altar, if we are permitted to interpret it in the number-symbolism of Scripture.

Since God has abounded toward us in all wisdom and intelligence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, we may now rejoice in the knowledge of these precious and holy themes. They give comfort and confidence as we pass on in touch with a groaning creation which we know will be brought into the reality and blessing of Christ's glory. God has given to us knowledge of His counsel, so that while it is still night for the world we may walk in the light of day. This is to have its practical effect upon us, for we are not of the night but of the day. It should lead us to walk through the world as not of it, not influenced by the spirit of this age, but as sober and watchful, wearing the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation—that salvation for which we wait and which will be realized at the coming of the Lord. Not only so, but when the redeemed creation will be enjoying the accomplishment of all that we now know to be God's purpose and which gives cause for present rejoicing in the Lord, we shall be with Him, sharing as the Body with the Head in all the various features of that glorious kingdom, not in an earthly but heavenly relation. And though we shall then be in the glory and around the throne forever, we will never fail to look at and consider the place of sacrifice, viewing it then from the inner Sanctuary. The Lamb shall be seen in the midst of the throne.

3. The ordinances of the altar are now given. They relate to its establishment as a place of worship where the priests shall offer the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings of the people. In this there is an abiding witness to their acceptance by Jehovah (ver. 27).

As already pointed out, this altar stands at the very centre of the sacred enclosure. The worshippers in the outer court, and "the Prince" who came in among them or sat in the east gate, would have attention and interest focused upon this great altar, and, as we may say, the glory of God in the house would look toward it. It would ever stand before the eyes of all as of fundamental importance

thou shalt take the bullock of the sin offering, and it shall be burnt in the appointed place of the house, [x]outside the sanctuary. And on the second day thou shalt offer a he-goat without blemish for a sin offering; and thou shalt cleanse the altar, as they cleansed it with the bullock. When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish; and thou shalt bring them near before Jehovah; and the priests shall cast [y]salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto Jehovah.

x Ex. 29. 14. Lev. 4. 11, 12, 21; 9. 11; 16. 27. Heb. 13. 11, 12.

y Lev. 2 13. cf. Nu. 18. 19. Mark 9. 49, 50.

to the blessing and welfare of the people, affording visible expression of their acceptance and the ground upon which the glory could abide among them.

These ordinances are given in view of the day when they shall *make* the altar, a word of comfort and assurance to the remnant in the land of their captivity that the time would come when the nation would again be restored and the divine centre for worship be set up. With this prophecy before them it is not surprising to see that those who return from Babylon to the land of their fathers first built the altar.

The altar has a twofold purpose — to offer burnt-offering and sprinkle blood. The burnt-offering signifies full acceptance, the sprinkled blood, accomplished expiation. That offering all goes up to God as an odor of sweet smell, and the shed blood tells of judgment borne, vindicating the righteousness of God and answering to the holiness of His nature. The perfect service and obedience symbolized in the offering satisfies His heart, and the blood suffices to meet all the requirements of His throne. The altar too sanctifies the gift, and thus all combines to set before us the preciousness and perfection of the Person and work of Christ.

Then the priests of Zadok's seed are to minister at the altar. Zadok fills a prominent place in the history of Israel, being high priest in David's and Solomon's reigns. He remained faithful to David during Absalom's rebellion, and with Nathan the prophet espoused the cause of Solomon when Adonijah sought to secure the throne. David being of one mind with them instructed Zadok to anoint Bathsheba's son (1 Kings i. 8, 26, 32-45). Zadok thus stands as representative of the priesthood in association with the king of God's choice, and with the kingdom as established by Him in David's seed—type of Christ. Zadok descended from Eleazar (1 Chron. vi. 50-53), Aaron's third son, who succeeded to the high priesthood upon his father's death. We have already seen that this is a lesson of resurrection (see notes, Num. xxi.). Eleazar being a type of the resurrection priesthood of Christ, his association was with the new generation who were to enter the land, suggesting Israel as new born, to whom under new covenant relation will be given possession of the land and the fulfilment of the promise. Fittingly, then, the seed of Zadok fill the priestly place in the glorious Millennial day.

[z] Seven days shalt thou offer daily a goat for a sin offering; they shall also offer a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish. Seven days shall they make atonement for the altar and purify it, and consecrate it. And when these days are ended, it shall be that upon the [a] eighth day and onwards, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[z] Ex. 29. 35-37.

[a] Lev. 9. 1.

There are seven days of consecration, on the eighth and thereafter the regular services may be performed. In the seven we have the perfect basis laid for abiding worship which is of new creation character and in the grace of the new covenant.

If the divine glory has found its resting-place in this shrine of holiness, the plan and order of which is expressive of the divine character, then for the people to be able to draw near in their place and enjoy the blessings of acceptance and fellowship with that glory, the altar and its service are essential. Only on the ground of sacrifice which presents the truth of atonement and purification can man make his approach to the dwelling-place of God. Thus the altar stands related to the people themselves and their place with God. It stands as identified with what they are, and they being sinful, makes atonement for it necessary to purify and consecrate it. In what is accomplished for *it*, the people see, as in an object lesson, what is accomplished for *them*.

It is not hard to see in this a picture of precious truth regarding Christ and His people. He in His grace identified Himself with them, and so what they were in themselves made it necessary for Him to be the sacrifice, bearing as in their place the very judgment they deserved. Thus He accomplished atonement that they might know identification with Him in the acceptance of the sacrifice He made. Of that one offering by which all who are sanctified are perfected—we now, Israel in the future, and all who believe—these sacrifices are the significant type, as in the future day they will be an ever-witnessing memorial. If our blessed Lord took our sins upon Himself, He also endured the smiting by which atonement was made, so that coming from under the curse which He took for our sakes He can stand before God's glory, and appear in His presence on our behalf, even—may we say?—as the great altar stands before the house in which the glory dwells. Now in the place He fills we read our own acceptance and privilege in fellowship with the glory itself, together with the glory of redemption and the blessing of salvation.

Sin and burnt offerings are made for seven days. These present two aspects of atonement by which reconciliation is effectual and access procured. Sin is fully dealt with in judgment, and that as carried out in the burning in the outside place—the place where Jesus suffered that He might sanctify the people with His own blood. This was accomplished according to the will of God to which He rendered perfect obedience, offering Himself without spot in the power of the eternal Spirit. So we find what is toward man in his dire need as a sinner, but for the eternal satisfaction of God in respect to all that he deserved as being such a creature; and then

Section 4 (Chap. xliv.).

Regulations concerning those who minister in the Sanctuary

1 (1-3) The supremacy of Jehovah

1. And he brought me back toward the [b]outer gate of the sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. And Jehovah said unto me, This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and none shall enter in by it: for Jehovah, the

b ch. 43. 1.

what is toward God to His eternal glory, the one accomplished righteousness of the Man Christ Jesus, obedient even unto death, but for our eternal blessing as accepted in the abiding perfection of such fragrance as God alone can fully appreciate. Thus are we redeemed from destruction and crowned with loving-kindness.

There is the young bullock in all the energy and power of fresh, new life, neither aged nor blemished—type of the Perfect Servant who came only to do God's will. The he-goat speaks of the sinner's Substitute; the ram is the symbol of devotedness even unto death. The salt, the preservative power of holiness and the sign of the covenant, is that which secures beyond possibility of failure. And then the sprinkled blood of the salted sacrifice, the precious blood, effects expiation and the forgiveness of sins according to the holiness of God and the perfection of the offering.

Let us not leave this section without linking its three parts together—the glory, the sacrifice, and the worship of the redeemed people. As being a third section it suggests manifestation, the fulness revealed, and that is given in a threefold way, as just remarked. Is not the order here that which characterizes Christian blessing also? First, Christ in whom the glory all centres, in whom the fulness dwells, must be in His rightful place, that of being at the right hand of the Majesty on high in the heavenly Sanctuary, the true holy of holies. There He entered, saluted of God as priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. Then the measure of the altar could be given, the truth of the wonderful work in all its varied parts be told out, be given manifestation in the testimony rendered in its due time. This brings out the meaning of the new place, its worship, the acceptance known and enjoyed in the light of the fulness now revealed. The place of Christ in glory, the testimony to His blessed Person and work in redemption, and the place of His people as identified with Him, constitute the threefold cord of revealed truth which none can break.

Sec. 4.

1. Now that all as to the Sanctuary and altar has been set in order we are given the regulations concerning the ministers of the Sanctuary. It is not surprising that in this connection we are again reminded of the divine glory, and also to find that there is an abiding witness to its entrance into the House and to the essential preeminence of Jehovah, in that none, not even the Prince, is to enter by the east gate through which Ezekiel saw the Glory enter.

In the past kings, priests, and people had fallen into the evil of treating Jehovah as though He was altogether like one of them-

God of Israel, [c]hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. As for the prince, he shall sit therein as prince to eat bread before Jehovah; [d]he shall enter by the way of the porch of the gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.

[c] ch. 43. 4.

[d] ch. 46. 2, 8.

selves. In their rebellion and idolatry He had become but one God among many, even though they might give Him first place in their Pantheon. In the theocracy of the future there shall be one Jehovah and His name one. His absolute supremacy will be acknowledged by all, and the evil of idolatry will be banished from the earth. So the majesty and distinctive glory of Jehovah is emphasized by the shutting of the East Gate by which He entered His House; no one may enter or go out by that gate.

Here a dignitary is introduced who has not been mentioned before —the Prince. He is privileged, as no other person, to occupy the porch of the east gate, sitting there to eat bread before Jehovah. But he does not pass through the gate, he enters by the porch and goes out by the same way. Thus the special sanctity of this gate would be impressed upon all, and particularly upon the Prince himself, reminding him of his subordinate place; the closed gate and the limited privilege of this person who appears to be the highest secular dignitary in the nation, teaching all of the supreme place of Jehovah. We may notice that the porch is at the end of the gate-building toward the west, facing the altar and the House.

This important personage, the Prince, is apparently one of the nation, not Christ Himself: his sons are spoken of (xlvi.16) and he offers a sin-offering for himself (xlv. 22). It seems clear that he occupies a representative position, yet neither the same as that of the high priest, of whom Ezekiel does not speak, nor that of the king as formerly known in Israel. He is not accorded the privileges nor the power of either. He seems to occupy an intermediary place between the people and the priesthood, since he is found among the former in their seasons of worship (xlvi. 10), not among the priests, nor privileged to enter the inner court, yet drawing nearer than the people themselves, since he may worship in the inner east gate which opens upon the inner court, while the people worship in the outer court as gathered at the door of this gate (xlvi. 2). But he is responsible to supply the various offerings at the feasts, the new moons, the sabbaths, in all the solemnities of the house of Israel, and he is therefore the recipient and holder of what the people offer for these occasions; and thus too the priesthood would look to him for the provision needed to carry on the national worship (xlv. 13-22). Then he is given his own special portion in the land, and he is enjoined not to take any of the people's inheritance (xlv. 7, 8; xlvi. 18; xlviii. 21, 22). The Oblation and the Sanctuary are spoken of as in the midst of the Prince's portion.

These considerations show that the Prince occupies quite a unique place in the history of Israel. It serves to emphasize the absolute character of the theocracy as to both kingly and high priestly rule. They are vested in the Messiah Himself, not in any mere man. Priests and kings of the past may have been types, but now the Antitype has come—the substance has replaced the shadow. This

2 (4-14) The judgment and holiness which become His house.

2. And he brought me the way of the north gate before the house, and I beheld, and lo, the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah; and I fell upon my face. And Jehovah said unto me,

world to come of which this vision treats will not be in subjection to angels, but to Him to whom all things have been made subject according to God's purpose, even Jesus (Heb. ii. 5-10). Angelic hosts will then attend the Son of Man (Matt. xiii. 41; xxiv. 31; xxv. 31; John i. 51; 2 Thess. i. 7).

Returning to our chapter, we see then in the closure of the east gate a standing object-lesson teaching the sanctity and preeminence of Jehovah, showing that none, not even Prince or priests, are to be thought of as approaching in any measure an equality with God such as free access at the same gate might be construed to imply. Still in the privilege of the Prince to partake of a sacrificial feast in the porch of this gate we get an intimation of the connection of the saved nation and the glory of God which has hallowed this gate in a special manner, for in his place he is doubtless representative of the nation. His communion, and so that of the nation as seen in him, is with God whose glory entered by that gate and now dwells in His House in their midst—a holy, happy, salutary lesson.

We see too that all the worship would be conducted with faces *westward.* This furnishes an instructive contrast to what the prophet had seen in the entry of the temple as recorded in chapter viii.—twenty-five men with their backs to the temple and their faces toward the *east,* worshipping the sun. In their evil course they had reversed God's order. In how many things it is found that man's thought is the very opposite of God's, the sad consequence of departure and alienation through sin. How evident it is also that Satan's constant aim is to induce the creature to turn its back upon God and have an idol of his own which is always another creature, for fallen man will have his god to be like himself, and groping in the moral darkness into which he has fallen he deifies his own lusts and passions and makes their gratification the chief feature of his worship. Every step of God's advancing revelation through the ages has been to undo this lie which has wrapped itself around the heart and mind of man, blinding him to the light which he learns to hate because his deeds are evil, while for the same reason he loves the darkness. That revelation reached its meridian splendor in the coming of the Son, and now it is known beyond all possible question that in God is no darkness at all, that indeed He is light and love, not darkness and hate. He is One whose thoughts are as high above man's as the heavens are above the earth. This lesson, to learn which brings the creature into its right place and therefore its real blessing, seems clearly suggested to us in what Ezekiel sets forth.

2. The prophet is now brought before the House by way of the north gate. This was the gate of sacrifice, as we have seen. Is not this significant? For only by the way of *sacrifice* can we be brought before the glory of God. This he beholds filling the House, and bows low in *worship.* Then Jehovah *reveals* to him the ordinances which follow, after which he is taken to view other parts of the

Son of man, set thy heart [to this], and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee, concerning all the statutes of the house of Jehovah, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house with every going forth of the sanctuary. And thou shalt say to the [e]rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: let it suffice you of all your abominations, O house of Israel, in that ye

[e] ch. 2. 3; 12. 9. Deut. 31. 27. Isa. 30. 1, 9.

sacred enclosure. How suggestive the order — sacrifice, worship, revelation.

It is instructive to note that the communication of these ordinances of service and worship, including the allotment of the heave-offering, the feasts and special solemnities, with instruction as to the ways of righteousness which become those who draw near to God, should be given in the light of the glory and in close relation to where the work of sacrifice is performed. Three important truths are thus brought together—the glory of God who is the Holy One, the work of redemption as set forth in the sacrifices, and the holy ways which are to characterize God's people. Peter, setting before us God's holy character and government, enjoins us to walk in holiness and fear, forasmuch as we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. i. 14-19). Redeeming love in Christ has given perfect answer to the light which God is, in which all that we are and have done is searched out and manifested, and which according to holiness God must judge. Thus we who believe are made fit for the portion of the saints in light, and as thus accepted by God we are privileged to enter the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. This being so, we are under the responsibility to behave ourselves according to the holy requirement of God our Father. Here His government over us comes in, and only the more so since He has abounded toward us in such riches of grace.

God claims the attention of the whole man (ver. 5)—heart, eyes, ears; and note, it is the inner man first. The heart stands for the inner springs of man's being and life. As from this organ of our physical frame the blood goes forth to energize the whole of the body's wonderful structure, returning to it to be again prepared for continued work in the circulatory system, so in the spiritual realm we have, as we may say, man's spirit and soul, the seat of his intellectual and emotional faculties which are manifested in his course of life. These are claimed by God, and as being under His control (other control can only result in spiritual death) there goes forth into the spiritual sphere, into all its paths of movement, of circulation, of feeling and emotion, that vital energy which makes us fit vessels for divine service. Then our vision (the eyes) will be full of that light which shines from the innermost Sanctuary enlightening the inner man; and one Voice will be heard, whose accents falling upon the multitudinous strings of our spiritual ears, send those vibrations of divine speech and harmony through our being which bring the desired response to the Master.

have brought in [f]aliens, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to profane it, even my house, when ye offered [g]my bread, [h]the fat and the blood; and they have broken my covenant, besides all your abominations. And ye have not kept the charge of my holy things, but have set keepers at my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves.

[f] Num. 3. 10, 38; 18. 4, 7. *cf.* Num. 16. 40. 2 Chr. 26.18. Lev. 10. 1-3. Eph. 5. 18 with Phil. 3. 3.
[g] Lev. 21. 6, 17, 21; 22. 25; 3. 11, 16.
[h] Lev. 7. 22-27; 3, 16, 17.

The prophet is told to mark well, literally, "set thine heart to," what Jehovah is making known. This is called for in view of the service he is to perform, that of communicating God's mind to the people. It is well for us to remember that such occupation with what God may give is ever essential for the carrying out of any commission He may call upon us to fulfil. Purpose of heart is the necessary qualification for any servant of the Lord. One may possess much learning and great natural ability, be attractive in person and eloquent in speech, and yet useless, because the heart is not right, its purpose not formed in the secret place with God. If the inner man is under the power of divine things it is certain that the members of the outward man will be yielded in happy service to the holy and perfect will of God. God looks upon the heart, not upon the outward appearance, which may easily deceive.

The prophet is called to give whole-hearted attention to Jehovah's Word. Apart from this he could not rightly perform his mission. Nor can we know how to rightly number our days and apply our hearts to wisdom apart from such attention to the Word of God. It alone provides a thorough furnishing of the man of God for every good work. Let us feed upon it, walk by it, preach it, serving others out of its treasuries, into which we daily enter with believing and worshiping hearts. Our hearts should stand in awe of that Word, while having joy in it as those who find great spoil (Ps. cxix. 161, 162).

Jehovah first reproves the house of Israel for their evil ways. They had forgotten His holy claims and defiled His house with their abominations. In view of this He established the ordinances which follow. By them they will be kept ever mindful of the past and of His own holiness, to safeguard which from all unlawful intrusion insures to them the fullest blessing and His own proper glory.

In earlier chapters of this book the prophet has told of Israel's abominations (*e.g.*, chaps. viii., xi.), and many times have they been referred to as rebellious. Here they are so spoken of for the last time. This then is a word for the people of Ezekiel's day, for when this new temple is built they will be no longer of such a character. This shows that God intended the new order of things to be established in the future, which the prophet was making known, to have a present effect upon the ways of the people. As they learned what God purposed for the day of glory, they were to already separate themselves from past evils, which had come in through gross carelessness as to His honor and holiness. This, it may be said, is consistently God's purpose in revealing the future. Those to whom it is revealed are responsible to walk in its light. God's purpose as to

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: No alien, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any alien that is among the children of Israel. But the Levites who went far away from me, when Israel went astray, that [i]went astray from me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight of the gates of the house, and doing service in the

[i] chs. 22. 26; 48. 11. 2 Ki. 23. 8,9. 2 Chron. 24. 4-11. Jer. 2. 8, 26-28.

future judgment or glory is His call to us to conduct ourselves now in a manner accordant with the revelation granted, and so to be witness to those around us of what we know is sure to come. This is the path of faith, for faith believing God's testimony enters into fellowship with Him as to His purposes, and then judges of the present in the light of that secret which faith possesses, and which becomes its strength and comfort while waiting in the present. Thus we know that the day of the Lord is coming upon the ungodly world. It is not only a day of judgment but also the time of established righteousness and peace which Christ will bring in, and in which we shall have our part and place with Him. We are of the day, and not of this world's present night. Hence we are to walk *now* as those who are of the day, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation—salvation out of the world which goes on to wrath (1 Thess. v.). Whatever God has revealed in His prophetic Word is by no means for the gratification of curious minds, but so that he who believes it may walk with God in the present. By doing this we find practical deliverance from this present evil age, not being conformed to it, but transformed by the renewing of our minds in daily fellowship with God through His word of truth. So now Jehovah makes known by Ezekiel the order of things to obtain in the new Sanctuary and its service, that the people may learn therefrom and let the past suffice to have wrought abomination and rebellion.

Although these visions belong to a time still future, we see by the ministry of reproof and correction given in this chapter and the previous one (xliii. 7-11; xliv. 6-13), relating to the people and their rulers, both civil and religious, that God always has a present object in view in the revelations He gives. He brings the past into contrast with the future, that in the present practical sanctification may be realized in ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. Isaiah first describes the glory of the Millennial state, and then admonishes the people, saying, "House of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah" (Isa. ii. 1-5).

In the first place provision is made to guard the Sanctuary from such profanation as had entered its precincts in the time of the kingdom. The evils that Jehovah rebukes had come in through unholy alliances with idolatrous neighbors, and by having hired foreigners to keep the charge of the gates. Such a state of things was aided by the close proximity to the temple of the king's palace, so that the corruption of the royal house first seeped into the sacred enclosure of the first temple and then flooded it with wickedness, as

house: they shall slay the burnt offerings and the sacrifices for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. Because they ministered unto them [j]before their idols, and were a [k]stumbling block of iniquity unto the house of Israel, therefore have I lifted up my hand against them, saith the Lord Jehovah, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me, to execute the office of priest unto me,

[j] 2 Ki. 16. 10-16.
[k] ch. 14. 1-5.

in the days of Ahab and Manasseh. Balaam was made to give God's thought concerning His people: "Lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations;" and he it was who later did his best to accomplish their mixture with the wicked nation of Moab. He could not curse, but becoming acquainted with God's purpose, and being an enemy, he sought their overthrow by subtlety (Num. xxxi. 16). He snares them into evil associations, and God must deal in judgment. From this we learn what is meant by the doctrine of Balaam, and it shows one of the great wiles of the devil against which we must be on our guard. His constant effort is to effect mixture where God's express mind is separation and purity. The admixture of Israel with the nations in her later history wrought her ruin, and brought the judgment of the Captivities and desolation. The admixture of the world and the Church, a greater evil, has wrought a correspondingly worse ruin. Scripture has especially warned us of this evil (2 Cor. vi. 11-18), so disastrous, whether in the individual or corporate sphere.

In this connection we may well consider Rev. ii. 14. It is one of those many instances in Scripture in which the things written aforetime for our admonition are taken up and made of present application. The doctrine of Balaam consisted, as we have seen, in the counsel he gave, directing the women of Moab and Midian to seduce the people of Israel into association with them in their idolatrous festivities, with which there was a practice of gross moral evil. Israel was caught in the snare of those friendly advances, which had behind them the enemy's purpose to destroy the character of God's people as called to "dwell alone," in separation to God, whose holy ways and worship had been revealed to them. Doubtless, the seduction was intended to deprive Israel of her distinctive position and favor with God, which Balaam had been forced to proclaim. God's thought was that His people should be separate from all the abounding evil of the nations. Balaam's doctrine was that a mixture should be effected between them. Fleshly lusts and false religious activities were the instruments used.

This history has been repeated in the relations established between the Church and the world. In the apostolic period idolatry touched every sphere of life. As a result, the early Christians of necessity withdrew largely from all the social and festive activities in which moral evil abounded, and in which they had formerly taken part (1 Pet. iv. 1-4). This brought against them much persecution and evil-speaking. In those days, to partake of the idol sacrifices came to signify the recantation of Christianity.

nor to come near to any of my holy things, [even] to the things that are most holy; but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. Yet will I make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

3 (15-31) The priests: the features of their place and portion as sanctified unto Jehovah

3. But the priests, the Levites, the sons of [l]Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord Jehovah. They

l cf. 1 Sam. 2. 35 with 2 Sam. 15. 24, and 1 Ki. 2. 27, 35.

But things changed; the world became friendly and sought association with the Church, who, like Israel, was snared into evil practices. *The doctrine of mixture prevailed.* This destroyed the true character and testimony of the Church in the world. Expansion by compromise with the idolatrous world became the policy of its leaders. Features and practices of heathendom were incorporated into its life, both publicly and privately. But to-day we do not think of this, because idolatry has passed away. Nevertheless it has its lesson for us. This same principle of *mixture* assailed the returned remnant in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and wrought and caused them much sorrow. It is one of our great dangers, if not the greatest. The idol-feasts, with their open immorality, are not around us to-day; but there are still idols to keep from, and fleshly lusts from which to turn away. With the light and knowledge we have, whatever displaces God, or represents Him as different from what He is known to be as revealed in Christ, or that changes His truth, cannot be followed without some form of moral failure resulting. Truth refused, perverted, or neglected, is accompanied in some degree with moral laxity and spiritual decrepitude.

3. Returning to our chapter we find that the Levites, except the family of Zadok (ver. 15), are appointed to keep guard and do the service of the house, but are excluded from the priestly office. In the government of God they are shut out from this higher place because of their previous history. They had followed the people into idolatry, and were a stumbling-block of iniquity instead of resisting the incoming evil and instructing the people in the laws of the covenant under which they stood in relation to Jehovah. God requires that which is past; and in His ways of holy government such departure from His revealed and known will must be remembered in judgment, though those subject to it are personally safe. The day of loss and reward is certain, and this God's grace does not set aside. The future will bring out results which flow from the past, for as we sow we reap. If our work is good we shall receive reward, if bad we shall suffer loss, though we ourselves are saved. This solemn lesson is seen in the case of the Levites. The past and its lessons would thus be kept before them as they fulfilled their service, and be a constant reminder to all the people of the nation's

shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall approach unto my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. And it shall be that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with [m]linen garments; and no [n]wool shall come upon them, while they minister in the gates of the inner court, and towards the house.

m Ex. 28. 39, 40. 42. 43.
n cf. Deut. 22. 11.

past sin, in which the Levites had joined, ministering to them before their idols.

The same principle of righteous government finds illustration in the priests of Zadok's line. They had remained faithful when Israel departed from Jehovah, and now in the day of Messiah's kingdom they fill the nearest place. Past faithfulness meets its reward. Having previously spoken of Zadok's place in the nation's history, we may without further remark consider the details now given regarding the priestly office.

The difference between the Levites and the priests is that the former stand before the people and minister to them, while the priests minister to Jehovah, stand before Him, and enter the Sanctuary. The holy privilege of going into God's presence and of fellowship with Him at His table is characteristic of the priestly place.

There are twelve features in the regulations of this section, falling into *four* groups of three each. All have to do with the service and walk, in which there is to be a manifestation of truth and holiness in keeping with their Sanctuary privileges.

1. Regulations regarding their place and service in the Sanctuary.
   - i. Their sacred charge (ver. 15a).
   - ii. Their holy service in this charge (vers. 15b, 16).
   - iii. Their holy garments (vers. 17-19).
2. Regulations regarding their habits and relationships.
   - i. Their hair—moderation, no extremes (ver. 20).
   - ii. Their abstinence—sobriety (ver. 21).
   - iii. Their marriage—purity (ver. 22).
3. Regulations regarding their service toward the people.
   - i. Their work of teaching (ver. 23).
   - ii. Their work of judgment (ver. 24a).
   - iii. Their responsibility to observe and care for the order of divine worship (ver. 24b).
4. Regulations regarding their separation from defilement.
   - i. As to the dead (vers. 25-27).
   - ii. As to inheritance (ver. 28).
   - iii. As to their food (vers. 29-31).

The Sanctuary, then, is in their charge. This brings to them an access that others do not share, and with it a ministry peculiarly their own. The fat and the blood are specially mentioned, and then the table, for communion can only follow that of which the former elements speak.

The fat and the blood were especially reserved from all the offerings as being God's own portion. Compare Lev. vii. 22-27. The fat is spoken of as the food of the offering, and as burnt for a sweet

They shall have linen tires upon their heads, and linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with [anything that causeth] sweat. And when they go forth unto the outer court, even unto the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers; and they shall put on other garments, that they may [o]not sanctify the people with their garments.

o Ex. 29. 37; 30. 29.

savor (Lev. iii. 16). It stands for that which is entirely consecrated to God in all that pertains to both the will and the energy of life, which is all given up to Him, even as the fat is all consumed on the altar. In this connection it is of interest to note, as another has done, that the word for ashes used in reference to the sacrifices "literally means 'fat.' This has been thought to be because of the burning of the fat upon the altar, which would thus saturate the ashes. Be that as it may, the word is significant and suggestive. Ashes are the witness that the fire has done its work, the witness of an accomplished and accepted sacrifice. So we read in the margin of Ps. 20: 3, 'The Lord *turn to ashes* thy burnt sacrifice,' translated 'accept,' in explanation of the text. This witness of an accepted sacrifice is not a sign of sorrow, for which the word [generally translated 'ashes'] is used, [as also for] showing the emptiness and vanity of things (Esther 4: 1, 3; Job 2: 8; 42: 6; Isa. 61: 3, etc.; 44: 20). There is *nothing* worthless in connection with the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"The ashes of the sacrifice were first put on the east side of the altar, toward the sun-rising; they were then removed to a *clean* place outside the camp (Lev. 4:12; 6:10,11). Our blessed Lord's body, after He had yielded up His life to God on the cross, was kept absolutely inviolate. The piercing of the spear was in fulfilment of Scripture, and furnished the evidence that He had actually died. But 'a bone of Him shall not be broken' (John 19: 33-37). So that precious body ('A body hast Thou prepared Me,' Heb. 10: 5) was not suffered to be treated as that of a criminal, but was judicially handed over to those who loved Him, wrapped in fragrant and costly perfume, and laid in a new grave hewn out of the rock (John 19: 38-42; Luke 23: 52, 53). Does this not show in reality what was suggested in the 'fat ashes?'...The same unyielding judgment that had dealt with Him on the cross now demanded the fullest honor to Him, in judicial testimony to the acceptance of His sacrifice. The east side of the altar, the side of the sunrise, where the ashes were placed, is not only the witness of accepted sacrifice, but the pledge of resurrection. All this was ever before the Lord. He always linked His resurrection with His death (Matt. 16: 21). The ashes thus would speak of God's acceptance of Christ's sacrifice, giving full assurance to the believer of *his* acceptance."—*Lectures on the Tabernacle*, pp. 439-441, by S. Ridout.

This is an acceptance connected, therefore, with all the preciousness to God of which the fat speaks. So we may say the fat speaks of our blessed Lord Himself in His unreserved and perfectly acceptable devotion to God's holy will, for the accomplishment of which He

[p]Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall duly poll their heads. [q]Neither shall any priest drink wine when they enter into the inner court. [r]Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the

p Lev. 21. 5.
q Lev. 10. 9.
r Lev. 21. 7, 13, 14.

yielded up all the strength of His holy and perfect life in the work of the cross. Are not those words of Ps. xxii. significant of this? "Like water I am poured out, and My bones are all disjointed: My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast laid Me in the dust of death...I may tell all My bones: they gaze, they stare upon Me."

What other language could more vividly depict the utter yielding up of all strength, of all fatness, in the work of sacrifice under the stroke of judgment? Truly this is the food of the offering, and a sweet savor to God. In it He finds His special portion and eternal delight.

Then there is the blood, it speaks of life, but laid down under judgment, given upon the altar to make atonement. No one was permitted to eat blood (Lev. iii. 17; xvii. 10-14; xix. 26). Life essentially belongs to God, man has forfeited all claim to it through sin; but in connection with the sacrifices it speaks of Christ who became a Substitute for sinful men, and that the judgment sin required has been executed upon Him. As put upon the altar it declares the truth of acceptance, and provides the basis of worship for God's people; as put upon the gate it marks the way of access into that blessing, and as put upon the House itself it shows what permits God to be with and dwell among His people, for it fully cleanses and atones in relation to all that would defile (xliii. 20; xlv. 19, 20). The precious blood of Jesus cleanses from every sin. That precious blood gives us our access, for we are made nigh by it; it gives us our acceptance, for we are taken into favor in the Beloved in whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of offences; it enables God who is just to justify the ungodly who believe in Jesus; and in virtue of His work He will present His redeemed people faultless in the presence of God's glory so that He will be found dwelling among them for eternity.

The next regulation refers to the clothing of the priests for entrance into God's presence. They must be clothed in linen garments. No wool was permitted, nothing that would promote the exudation of nature, for this can have no place in *His* presence. That stands identified with man's toil as a sinner (Gen. iii. 19). Linen we are familiar with as a symbol of righteousness, and of the righteousnesses of the saints, as in Rev. xix. 8. Whether we think of it in reference to our standing before God, what we are made in Christ, or the practical life of the believer, it is that which alone suits the holy presence of God. Such in fact are the garments of praise which should ever invest us as a holy priesthood. This alone rightly manifests His character, and on our part alone marks us as truly representing Him. Righteousness is the first feature of the kingdom of God (Rom. xiv. 17). He who loves us and has washed us

seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that is the widow of a priest. And they shall [s]teach my people [the difference] betwen the holy and the common, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in a controversy they shall stand to [t]judge: they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed times; and they shall hallow my sabbaths. And they

s Lev. 10. 10, 11. *ctr.* ch. 22, 26.

t Deut. 17. 8-11. 2 Chr. 19. 10.

from our sins in His blood, has made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father (Rev. i. 5, 6); and hence we are to follow righteousness (2 Tim. ii. 22). We are to avoid evil, do good, seek and pursue peace, "because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears toward their supplications; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who shall injure you if ye have become imitators of that which is good? But if also ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye; but be not afraid of their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord the Christ in your hearts" (1 Pet. iii. 11-15). The righteous Lord loveth righteousness.

In no one like to the Lord Himself was the truth of the linen fully and perfectly displayed. So He is our example that we should follow in His steps.

Righteousness, we may say, is acting according to the place in which God has set us. As His righteousness in Christ, we are to be followers of Him as dear children. Thus in these verses we have been considering, we get first the place and its privileges (15, 16), then the responsibility to be clothed as befits that place, and to guard all as sanctified to the Lord.

In the second group of regulations, three important principles appear. That as to the hair shows how moderation is to mark those who present Jehovah's offerings. They are to avoid extremes on the one side or the other. Neither undue severity nor fleshly looseness is to characterize their ways.

Hair occupies an important place in Scripture. In the case of the Nazarite it signifies lowly dependence upon God, the only proper creature-attitude, with withdrawal from the things of the flesh and its stimulus, so that action is not under such influences. In 1 Cor. xi. it is used to show the relative place of man and woman in the divine order of creation—the short hair of the man indicating his headship and responsibilty to rule, the long hair of the woman that of her place of dependence, yet helpfulness, without which the man is not complete. Thus we may see in it a sign of separation in devotedness to God, all that we are brought into subjection to His will, and so of obedience to His order for us in whatever sphere of relation we may be placed. It is evident that there may be that extreme asceticism which does dishonor to God's creature, or on the other hand the turning of the grace of God into dissoluteness. It is needless to remark that neither is of God. It is the avoidance of such extremes that seems suggested in this ordinance as to the hair. It counsels true-hearted devotion to God in accordance with the obedience His Word enjoins, so that fleshly extremes are avoided on both sides.

shall come at [u]no dead person to defile themselves, but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves. And after he is [v]cleansed, they shall reckon to him seven days. And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, into the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer [w]his sin offering, saith the Lord Jehovah. And they shall have an inheritance: [x]I am their inheritance; and ye shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their pos-

[u] Lev. 21. 1-3.
[v] Num. 19, 11, etc.
[w] Lev. 4. 3.
[x] Num. 18. 20. Deut. 10. 9; 18. 1, 2; Josh. 13. 33.

Abstinence from wine in connection with their service in the inner court well accords with what we have just considered. It "plainly covers all fleshly stimulus, which prevents clear discernment of what is or is not according to the mind and nature of God. For us also who are called to walk in the light of God's presence continually, this is not a casual, but a constant rule. The impulse of nature needs the restraint of Christ's yoke; even where, as the apostle says, things are lawful to us, we must still not be brought under the power of any (1 Cor. vi.12). And how easily do they acquire power!" It means the avoidance of all worldly, carnal methods, the love of the things of the world, in all that constitutes our place in worship and service as a holy and royal priesthood called to show forth the excellencies of Him who has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We are to be controlled by that sober judgment which is formed in the Sanctuary. The psalmist might envy the ease, prosperity and power of the wicked when not in the current of God's thoughts, but when he went into the Sanctuary then understood he their end (Ps. lxxiii.). It is to such sobriety that the apostle exhorts —a sobriety of a spiritually sound mind, fleshly desires and passions held in restraint, the habits of life well regulated with discretion and moderation. Compare 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 8; ii. 4, 6, 12; Rom. xii. 3; 1 Pet. iv. 7; 2 Cor. v. 13, sober, soberly, or sober-minded; Tit. ii. 2, temperate; ver. 5, discreet.

In the ordering of the marriage relation the purpose is to preserve purity of association. It comes as an added guard against yielding to the mere dictates of passion, or to acting in a careless, loose manner in forming the most sacred and important relation of human life. Compare Lev. xxi. 7-14.

Thus in every way the habits and relationships of the priests are to constitute a good witness for God. The priest is to "show out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom" (James iii. 13). "But as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. i. 15). Of course, we know that "conversation" means manner of life, and not merely our speech, though that is of itself an important factor.

The third group of regulations treats of priestly service toward the people. Let us not forget this order. To rightly fill priestly responsibility, to serve others in the work of teaching and judgment, we must first regulate our individual lives in accordance with the revealed mind of God. Here, as we know, Samson broke down, and

session. [y]They shall eat the meal offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. And the first of all the first fruits of every kind, and every heave offering of every kind, of all your heave offerings, shall be for the priests; ye shall also give unto the priests the first of your dough, that he may cause a blessing to rest on thy house. The priests [z]shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself, or of that which is torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

[y] Lev. 10. 12-17; 27. 21. Num. 18. 1-32.

[z] Lev. 22. 8.

how many another since his day! The apostle well understood this principle, and declares, "I buffet my body, and lead it captive, lest after having preached to others I should be myself rejected." This gives us a sober guiding principle. To love this present age results in forsaking the path of true service, as Demas did (2 Tim. iv. 10); that is only a form of self-love which refuses to give place to that love which would make Christ everything and all; in other words, to henceforth live unto Him who loved us and died for us, so that the life we now live in the flesh has Him for its supreme object. Plainly to know how to discern for ourselves, and so teach others the difference between the holy and profane, the clean and unclean, we must live in the light of the Sanctuary and know how to use its balances. And again what else can fit for the judgment of that which is in controversy? Those who thus serve and would lead others to obey the divine order must themselves observe God's holy laws and statutes, thus setting the example of obedience thereto. This is their responsibility, the foundation upon which the superstructure of priestly service must be built. When this is not so we may see the consequences depicted in the case of Eli's sons (1 Sam. ii. 12-30).

In the last part of this section we return to what relates to the walk of the priests. First, as regards defilement from the dead. Compare Lev. xxi. 1-6. To be connected with it in even the permitted cases defiles, requiring proper cleansing and the presentation of a sin-offering. Thus death becomes the remedy for the defilement which death brings in as the penalty of sin. To this the cross bears witness. But it is clear that general or promiscuous defilement was to be sedulously watched against. There is defilement in death because it is the penalty of sin, and what we have here is given as an evidence of what is suited to God's presence. The priestly place is viewed in that relation. Into *His* presence death and its defilement cannot come. Sin is inextricably linked with it, and so even Christ is forsaken when dying under its judgment. Only His death avails to bring poor helpless man into the life beyond its touch. And He so perfectly and completely met all the issues raised by sin and death that He could sit down in the presence of God—a witness, indeed, how all is removed from before God through that one sacrifice. Upon this depends all the exercise of power to take away sin by judgment. So we may learn from this regulation that the one who enters God's presence must be free from the touch of death, from the defilement it causes. As redeemed by the precious blood of Christ

Section 5 (Chaps. xlv., xlvi.).
Divine government exercised in the apportionment of the land, and the establishment of ordinances for worship and service

1 (1-8) The division of the land in which the Lord's claim is given first place

1. And when ye [a]shall divide by lot the land for an inheritance, ye shall offer a [b]heave offering unto Jehovah, a holy portion of the land: the

[a] ch. 47. 22.
[b] ch. 48. 8-14.

we are made free, and stand identified with the glorious resurrection-life of our Saviour and Great High Priest. Our priestly place as linked with Him is in the power of indissoluble life. The present practical effect of this is to be a godly care to avoid unnecessary contact with what death stands for—sin and its fruits; while when this comes in we must remember what becomes *His* presence, the cleansing which restores the disturbed communion and service. The governing principle is, "I will be sanctified in them that draw near to Me."

The subject of inheritance is next treated. "I am their inheritance ....I am their possession." The priests have no inheritance, no possession in Israel. Compare Num. xviii. 20; Deut. x. 9; xviii. 1. Is this a deprivation? Can it be that to be an heir of God, to have *Him* as one's inheritance and possession? Rather it expresses the highest possible place of nearness and blessing in which what God is becomes the portion of those so blessed. What more than this gives God His rightful place? The whole man is lifted up to Him in whom all his resources are found, from whom all his expectation must come. It reminds us of the Christian place—heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, who is the appointed Heir of all things, and He in whom we have obtained an inheritance into which we are brought according to the riches of His grace and to the praise of *His* glory. Now we joy in God, and rejoice in hope of *His* glory. Our city is of *His* building, our kingdom is of *His* preparation and giving.

Finally, the food of the priests is virtually all that is offered to Jehovah by the people—His portion becomes their's.

"Because of the anointing, the most holy things were given them to eat, which was a special privilege of the priests. The same thing is true with regard to us. Whatever is precious in the offering of Christ, in every point of view—in His life and in His death; in that bread come down from heaven, contemplated in His life of devotedness and grace here below; and in His death for us—all is the food and nourishment of our souls, in that communion with God in which we ourselves are kept in our priesthood. The priests alone ate the holy things, and they ate them in a holy place. It is only in the sense of the presence of God, and under the efficacy of that oil which is not poured on flesh, that we can truly realize what is precious in the work of Christ" (*Synopsis*, Vol. 1, pp. 261, 262).

Sec. 5.

1. The apportionment of the land and the arrangement of the heave offering, which includes the Sanctuary, we have already considered. Little more need be added here, except to notice that it is the Lord's portion that is specially in view. The tribal portions are stated in chap. xlviii. It is given *first* place, and the order in which the parts of this heave offering are mentioned emphasizes the Lord's

length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand:* this shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about. Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred by five hundred, square round about; and fifty cubits for the suburbs thereof round about. And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand; and in it shall be the sanctuary, the holy of holies.

* It may be better to read here 20,000 with the LXX. This is preferred by Keil, Davidson, and others. It seems to make ver. 3 more intelligible. "Of this measure [or, out of this measure, i.e., the 25,000x20,000]" they were to measure 25,000x10,000 for the priests, and in this the sanctuary was located. Thus the previously mentioned allotment of 500x500 plus 50 cubits all around was in this portion given to the priests. Ver. 5 tells us to whom the remainder of the 25,000x20,000 was assigned, namely, the Levites who received a portion equal in size to that of the priests. Both these portions are called holy in chap. 48: 10, 14, thus agreeing with chap. 45: 1 if read with the LXX—"This shall be holy [the 25,000x20,000] in all the borders thereof round about." The adjoining possession of the city is not called holy.—(J. B.)

preeminence. That of the priests and Levites comes first, for what has to do with the Sanctuary is of chief importance. This is the more evident since the priests' portion is first mentioned, although the central division of this offering from the land.

Ver. 8 shows how moral considerations govern throughout. The possession given to the Prince has in view the correction of past abuses when those who ruled in Israel appropriated for themselves the possession of others, as in the case of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings xxi.). Naboth's refusal was based on the Lord's word. His mind as to the change of possession had been given in Num. xxxvi. 7-9. The inheritance was not to remove from tribe to tribe, but each one was to cleave to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers; and provision was made to redeem any possession that had been sold because of poverty (Lev. xxv. 25-28). The book of Ruth affords us precious lessons in this connection. God's care that each of His people should have preserved to him the allotted inheritance, teaches us the unchangeable character of His giving (for all was determined by lot which He disposed), and that there is an individuality which He designs should be preserved in the inheritance. Thus the person and his portion in the land as allotted of God (Num. xxxiii. 54; Josh. xiv. 2; Num. xxxvi. 2, 3; Prov. xvi. 33) are so identified in His mind that no separation is to take place—individuality, distinctness and abiding character are involved in this. Israel lost her inheritance, and the land reverted to Him who had given it and who claims it as His. But Israel is to be brought back, and the land will be again divided by lot according to this vision of Ezekiel. Then shall its apportionment to the redeemed people abide according to the purpose of God.

Abuses such as that of Ahab's were decried by the prophets (Isa. v. 8). Micah pronounces, "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and

This is a holy portion of the land; it shall be for the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, who come near to minister to Jehovah, and it shall be a place for their houses, and a holy place for the sanctuary. And five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth, shall be for the Levites, the ministers of the house, for a possession for themselves, for their habitations.

And ye shall appoint [c]the possession of the city five thousand in breadth and five and twenty thousand in length side by side with the holy heave offering: it shall be for the whole house of Israel.

[c] ch. 48. 15-20.

And the prince shall have [d]his portion on the one side and on the other side of the holy heave offering, and of the possession of the city in front of the holy heave offering, and in front of the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward; and in length answering to one of the portions from the west border unto the east border. As land it shall be his for a possession in Israel; and

[d] ch. 48. 21.

take them by violence; and houses, and take them away; and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage" (chap. ii. 1, 2). Hosea says, "The princes of Judah are become like those that remove the land-mark" (chap. v. 10; see Deut. vi. 21; xix. 14). The oppression of the ruling classes had grown in evil from the days of Solomon. Ezekiel found the princes of the land "like wolves ravening the prey to shed blood, to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain" (xxii. 27). The prevalence of such oppression finds confirmation from many passages in the prophets, and these show how deep and vile was the corruption—religious, moral, and civic—which destroyed the life of both kingdoms (Israel and Judah) until there was no remedy, the unsparing stroke of judgment must fall. How good to know that the day of restoration shall not be darkened by this evil—"My princes shall no more oppress My people."

The lesson of this history is patent. With departure from God's order and the ways of truth and righteousness which His Word directs, oppression, tyranny, and violence come in as the means to establish man's unrighteousness and its evil brood. This marks the line of Cain at the very beginning, and human history bears its sad and solemn witness to the inevitable consequences of rejecting the revealed knowledge of God, whether in the individual, the family, the Church, or the nation. Under this incubus creation groans, and will continue to do so until He comes whose rod of iron shall smite, breaking in pieces the oppressor, bringing liberty to creation and freeing the nations from the shackles in which sin and Satan's power have bound them.

my princes shall no more oppress my people; but they shall give the land to the house of Israel according to their tribes.

2 (9-12) Justness in practical dealings required by Him whose ways are full of mercy and truth

2. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Let it suffice you, princes of Israel, [e]remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice; take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord Jehovah. Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, so that the bath shall contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be according to the homer. And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs; twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh.

e ch. 22. 27. Isa. 1. 23. Jer. 21. 12. 22. 3. Mic. 3. 1-12.

2. In the light of that coming day when the last blow of the oppressor's cruel will shall have fallen, and his terror cease from the earth, the prophet calls for that response in his day which would be in accord with the evident mind of God.

The admonition of these verses reaffirms the ordinances of the Law (Lev. xix. 15, 35, 36; Deut. xxv. 13-15). In the Proverbs we are assured that a false balance, divers weights and measures, are an abomination to the Lord (xi. 1; xx. 10); and by Micah He denounces the prevailing injustice, scant measure, deceitful weights. Amos also exposes the same wickedness (viii. 4-7).

Isaiah v. 10 makes clear that both liquid and dry measure are mentioned by Ezekiel, the bath being the former and the ephah the latter. The homer is made the standard for both, a measure approximately estimated at 11 bushels, or 90 gallons.

As to weights, the shekel is to be that of the Sanctuary, twenty gerahs (Exod. xxx. 13; Lev. xxvii. 25). The latter part of this verse is difficult to understand. The maneh is usually taken to equal fifty shekels; here it seems to be sixty, that is, 20+25+15; but if this is so, the reason for giving it in three parts is not apparent. Kiel inclines to consider the text corrupt; but Hengstenberg and Hitzig suppose a maneh of threefold value, but evidence for this is lacking. If the talent is correctly estimated as 60 maneh, the statement here seems at variance with Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26, an analysis of which gives the following result: 603,550 persons gave each half a shekel. This would give 301,775 shekels, deducting the 1,775 leaves the 300,000, which would be equal to the 100 talents, these being taken as sixty manehs each, requires each maneh to equal fifty shekels (100x60x50=300,000). This is true of the later Jewish weight system. The passage remains obscure. Some critics suggest the adoption of the LXX as read in the Alex. MS., "Five (shekels) shall be five, and ten shekels ten, and fifty shekels shall be your maneh," meaning that all shall be genuine, of equal and full weight. This at least is in accord with the moral significance of the context.

This insistance upon judgment, justice, honest measure and weight, may serve to remind us of the character of the Millennial age. It

3 (13 ch. 46: 15.) The materials for, and the order of, worship.
1 (13-17) The gifts of the people

3. [1]This is the heave offering which ye shall offer: the sixth part of an ephah out of a homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah out of a homer of barley; and the set portion of oil, by the bath of oil, shall be the tenth part of the bath out of the cor, [which is] a homer of ten baths; for ten baths are an homer; and one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred,

is the time when righteousness shall reign and all conform to the divine standards (Ps. xlv.; Isa. xi. 1-5; xxxii. 1-5, 16-19; xxxiii. 5, 6; lx. 17, 18; lxi. 10, 11; Jer. xxxiii. 15; Dan. ix. 24).

3. Here what relates to the worship of the people—their gifts, the feasts, and other regulations—is given in seven sub-sections. First, we considered the place of the Sanctuary (vers. 1-8); then ways of holiness and truth enjoined (vers.9-12); and now the order of worship, the manner of approach to God. This teaches us that right ways in practical life are the garments which must first invest those who are to be worshipers. The removal of evil and the following of righteousness must characterize those who offer their gifts to God. Of this the fine white linen in which the priests are clothed for service is the symbol. Apart from the accompaniment of obedience and practical righteousness, God can take no pleasure in mere outward observances and lip worship (Isa. i. 10-17; Matt. xv. 7-9). He desires mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings (Hos. vi. 6). Obedience is better than sacrifice. God looks upon the heart, His searching eye penetrates the mask of outward appearance, and what He desires of His people is that they should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him (Mic. vi. 7). This order, namely that of practical righteousness preceding activity in worship, fits well with this as a fifth section—the number that speaks of responsibility to maintain and be exercised in godliness as under the government of God with whom relationship has been established through grace. This principle holds good for us as well as Israel. This the Epistles abundantly teach. The marvelous grace which they reveal as ours only obligates us to answer the more fully to the righteous and holy requirements of Him whose love and grace we now know. The hands that are lifted up to Him are to be holy hands, the sacrifices of our lips confessing His name are to be yielded up from hearts true in their purpose for His glory, the out-breathing of lives yielded up to obedience in sincerity and truth—our bodies presented as living sacrifices.

[1] Let us now consider the various features of the order of worship. First we have the gifts of the people. These consist of wheat, barley, oil, and lambs, in the measure and proportion stated. All is given to the Prince from all the people of the land, and he is to supply the various offerings at the yearly and monthly feasts, on the sabbaths, and in all the solemnities. These gifts have their significance. As to the lamb little remark is needed, we are so familiar with it as the type of Christ, the Lamb of God. Oil is the well-known symbol of the Holy Spirit; this is associated with the oblation of an ephah presented with the various sacrifices. The cereals too we

from the well watered pastures of Israel; for a meal offering and for a burnt offering and for peace offerings, to make atonement for them, saith the Lord Jehovah. All the people of the land shall be [held] to this heave offering for the prince in Israel. And it shall be the prince's part [to give] the burnt offering and the meal offering and the drink offerings, in the feasts, and on the new moons, and on the sabbaths, in all the appointed times of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering and the meal offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings, to make atonement for the house of Israel.

think of in relation to Christ, the Bread of Life (wheat), while also the food of the poor and humble, to be which He Himself entered into humiliation (barley). Barley was, and still is, to some extent, the food of the poor (Ruth ii. 17; 2 Kings iv. 42; John vi. 9, 13). Its connection with Gideon makes it a type of those who are despised and of lowly condition. Then wheat is the figure used by the Lord in reference to His people, those really His whom He will gather into His barn. It thus becomes a symbol of what is true and genuine as the result of the divine work. Such alone are acceptable to God. On the other hand the barley may suggest the humble station of those who become God's people, and the lowly place they must take to enter into blessing with Him. To be converted man must become as a little child. It is to the babes that the Father makes His revelation of the Son. To the poor the gospel is preached, and "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Not many mighty, not many noble are called; but the despised and those of no account in the eyes of the world become God's peculiar treasure.

But aside from these suggestions, this heave-offering from all the people teaches the recognition of God's goodness and bounteous giving from the lowest to the highest, from the least to the greatest form of blessing (barley, wheat); realized in the power of the Spirit (oil), and redemption (the lamb). This should be true of all God's people, whether the form of blessing be earthly or heavenly.

Terumah, the word for heave-offering, means a sacrifice or gift offered up, that is, as raised or lifted up in presentation for acceptance, and as such devoted to Jehovah's service. In the Law the right shoulder is the usual heave-offering, the type of service, and that the most efficient, for the right shoulder is the one best able to bear the burden. It is the term applied to the gifts of Israel for the tabernacle, and in that connection we learn what God's mind is as to the inward state of those who offer: it is heart-willingness, the spirit of being wholly yielded up to God in devoted service, the inner attitude answering to the outward act as the gift is heaved or lifted up. Here in Ezekiel it is specially connected with the oblation which accompanies the sacrifices mentioned in these regulations (xlv. 24, 25; xlvi. 5, 7, 11, 14, 15); and then with two forms of offering, the burnt and peace-offerings, the latter being always mentioned in the plural, which thus emphasizes the ideas of thanksgiving and fellowship so

2 (18-25): The yearly feasts

2 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the first [month], on the first of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and thou shalt cleanse the sanctuary. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put it upon the door-posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court. So they shall do also on the seventh of the month for every one that erreth, and for the simple; and ye shall make atonement for the house.

prominent in those offerings (Lev., *Notes.*). Since the gift of lambs is only mentioned in the heave-offering of the people, and later in the sacrifices of the sabbaths and new moons and the daily burnt offering (xlvi. 3-5, 13-15), it would seem that the people are particularly associated with these occasions. We may conclude that the other animals of sacrifice, the bullocks, rams, and he-goats, are of the Prince's own providing, though in doing so he doubtless fills a representative place. In one case this is specifically stated (ver. 22). Yet that the people are identified with all these sacrifices may be seen in that an oblation accompanies each supplied out of the cereal-offering of all the people. The sacrifices for the purgation of the House (vers. 18-20) appear rather to be the responsibility of the priests, though the indefiniteness of the address—"Thou shalt"—may leave it open to question.

2 Now the yearly feasts are stated; and first the offerings to cleanse and atone for the House. Two occasions are mentioned, on the first and seventh of the first month. This is a remarkable deviation from the Levitical order. The great day of atonement is not mentioned, and these two occasions in the first month seem to take its place. The bullock only is offered, whereas in Lev. 16 there are the bullock and two goats, as well as the two rams for burnt-offerings. Yet the object in view is similar, cleansing and atonement respecting the House and those who err. We hear of no ark or mercy-seat, as of old, upon which the blood is sprinkled; but the blood is put upon the posts of the House, upon the altar, and the posts of the gate of the inner court. Which gate is not specified, though most likely the north gate was meant, for here the work of preparing the sacrifices took place.

The omission of not only the day of atonement, but also the offering of firstfruits, Pentecost, and the blowing of trumpets, is significant. In fact, at the time to which the vision of Ezekiel applies, all these will have been accomplished. The resurrection of Christ, the formation of the Church, and the regathering of Israel answer to them, while all that the day of atonement typified, including its application to Israel (Lev., *Notes*, p. 344), will have also found its fulfilment.

Evidently these sacrifices which open the year cannot be considered in the same light as those of old. These point back to the basic work of redemption at the Cross, as those of the past pointed forward to it—those anticipated it, these memorialize it. At the same

In the first [month], and the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have [f]the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. And upon that day shall the prince offer for himself, and for all the people of the land, a bullock for a sin offering. And the seven days of the feast he shall offer a burnt offering to Jehovah, seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily for the seven days; and a he-goat daily for a sin offering. And he shall prepare a meal offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and a hin of oil for an ephah.

[f] Ex. 12. 14-20 Lev. 23. 5-8, Num. 28. 16, 25.

In the [g]seventh [month], on the fifteenth day of the month, at the feast, shall he do the like seven days, according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meal offering, and according to the oil.

[g] Lev. 23, 34. Nu. 29. 12-40.

[3] (xlvi. 1-7): The sabbaths and new moons

[3] Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the [h]sabbath

[h] Nu. 28. 9, 10.

time they constitute a continual reminder of God's holiness, which must take notice of the least departure.

Next in order comes the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread. Here there are also marked differences from the Mosaic order, which required for each of the seven days two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, and an oblation of fine flour mingled with oil, graded for each (Num. xxviii. 19-21). Ezekiel requires seven bullocks and seven rams for each of the seven days, and no lambs. In both cases there is also the daily sin-offering of one he-goat. The oblation is one ephah for a bullock, and one for each ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah. In addition there is on the first day a bullock for a sin offering for the Prince and all the people, a feature not included in Numbers. The significance of this feast has been fully given in its place (Exodus, *Notes*), and in considering the offerings in Leviticus the spiritual meaning of the animals of sacrifice has been adequately stated. Here, then, let it suffice to notice that the offerings required are much richer than under the Law. This emphasizes the fulness of obedience in service (bullock) and consecration (ram). The omission of the lambs would concentrate attention upon the one lamb of this feast—the Passover lamb, and so upon Christ, the Lamb of God.

The third, and last, yearly feast is that of tabernacles. Referring again to Numbers (xxix. 12-34) we find here an entire change, and on the whole a simplified ritual, since it is to be the same as at the previous feast of unleavened bread. The eighth day appears omitted also, for its significance finds fulfilment in the establishment of the kingdom with its glorious new beginning of righteousness, peace, and rest for Israel, the nations, and creation itself.

[3] The ordinances which relate to the weekly and monthly feasts—sabbaths and new moons—are now given. In connection with them

day it shall be opened, and on the day of the [i]the new moon it shall be opened. And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of the gate from without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall offer his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate; then he shall go forth: but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. And the people of the land shall worship at the door of the gate before Jehovah on the sabbaths and on the new moons. And the burnt offering that the prince shall present unto Jehovah on the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish. And the meal offering shall be an ephah for the ram, and the meal offering for the lambs as he is able to give, and a hin of oil for an ephah. And on the day of the new moon, a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs and a ram: they shall be without blem-

[i] Nu. 28. 11-15.

a distinctive feature appears in regard to the east inner gate. This is closed for the six working days, but opened on the sabbath and the day of the new moon. At this open gate Prince and people worship (vers. 2, 3). The Prince is distinguished by alone having permission to enter its porch, and standing there to worship during the offering of his sacrifices. This brings these acts of worship into line with the great altar, and the entrance of the House, immediately before the indwelling glory.

Again comparing Num. xxviii. 9-15 we see there are marked differences.

NUMBERS	EZEKIEL
Sabbath: Two lambs, with their oblation of two-tenths parts of fine flour mingled with oil, and the required drink offering.	*Sabbath*: Six lambs, one ram, with an oblation of an ephah for the ram, and that for the lambs is left to the Prince's generosity: and oil, a hin for an ephah.
New Moon: Two bullocks, one ram, seven lambs, with their graded oblations. One goat for a sin-offering.	*New Moon*: One bullock, one ram, six lambs, with an oblation of an ephah for a bullock, and for the ram, and for the lambs according to the Prince's generosity: and oil, a hin for an ephah.

This new order of sacrifices gives greater prominence to the sabbath, while the greatly increased oblation in all cases may signify the increased fruitfulness and prosperity of those Millennial days; and the emphasis on the sabbath suggests that what it means for

ish. And he shall offer a meal offering, an ephah for the bullock, and an ephah for the ram, and for the lambs according to what his hand shall attain unto; and a hin of oil for an ephah.

4 (8-10): The manner of entrance and exit

4 And when the prince cometh in, he shall come in by the way of the porch of the gate, and he shall go out by the way thereof. And when the people of the land come in before Jehovah at the appointed times, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go out by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate by which he came in, but shall go out straight before him. And the prince shall come in in the midst of them, when they come in; and when they go out, they shall go out [together].

the earth and creation is then blessedly realized in the righteousness, peace, rest and abundant blessing of the kingdom. The enlarged oblations which answer to the meal-offerings of old, and are typical of Christ's Person in its human perfection, may well speak of the enhanced appreciation of Him in that day when He will no longer be One having no beauty that He should be desired. Of Him then will it be sung, "Thou art fairer far than the sons of men: grace is poured into Thy lips...Thy throne, O God, is forever and aye; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is an even sceptre." The larger proportion of the oil intimates the greater fulness of the Spirit, and so of apprehension. The offerings are increased threefold, for there is full realization through redemption of the victory of good over evil (6) in the sabbath-keeping of that coming day.

As to the differences on the feast of the new moon we can say little. The monthly return of the moon speaks of constant renewal under the good hand of God, and that of course of the creature, weak and nothing in itself, ever dependent upon the sufficiency and ministry of the Creator; like the moon, in itself nothing, and getting all its light from the great source of light and power, the sun. It has its special reference to Israel, but yields its lessons also for the Church and the individual (Numbers, *Notes*, p. 498). The bullock and ram must still speak of service and consecration, but in the victory of known redemption.

4 Certain directions as to the times of public worship follow. First, the Prince cannot enter the inner court. He comes into the porch of the east gate, which is at the outer end toward the court of general assemblage, and goes out the same way. This shows that he is not privileged to pass through the gate.

The people are to enter by one gate and leave by the opposite one. Only two gates are available for them, the north and south, for the outer east gate was perpetually closed. This rule of the Sanctuary is, in effect, "Let all things be done fittingly and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40). We have referred to the meaning of the north when con-

5 (11): The regulation as to the meal-offering

5And on the feast days, and at the appointed times, the meal offering shall be an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram; and for the lambs as he is able to give, and a hin of oil for an ephah.

6 (12): The Prince's free-will offering

6And when the prince shall offer a free-will burnt offering or free-will peace offerings unto Jehovah, the gate that looketh toward the east shall be open for him, and he shall offer his burnt offering and his peace offerings as he did on the sabbath day; and he shall go out again, and the gate shall be shut after he has gone out.

sidering that gate. The south affords another lesson. To go southward is to go toward Egypt—the land of the serpent, with its lure for the flesh, and its bondage too, though with this may be found a measure of ease and pleasure which gratifies the natural man. Abram travelled there to escape the famine and the exercise of dependence upon God alone. We are kept by His power through faith, not sight, but that means a path of both exercise and discipline. Relaxing influences are found in the south; they may be pleasant for a season, but there too we experience the burning heat which parches the earth and destroys fruitfulness. "How many have found the hot breath of worldly prosperity the destruction of spiritual fruit." In the tabernacle it is suggestive to find the table of the showbread on the north side, for the truth of communion is what we need and get there, where also we learn how through sacrifice judgment is forever removed so that our darkness is turned to light. But on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table, the candlestick was placed, for as we walk in the light of the Spirit we do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh—the south does not attract. Instead we bear the fruit of the Spirit, of which the *motif* used in designing the candlestick plainly speaks. Spiritually speaking, we need to pass through both the north and the south gates, for thus the altar and the House come into view and their lessons are impressed upon us.

5 The oblation, or meal-offering, is now specially emphasized by repeating its measure in relation to the sacrifices. Typical of Christ in His perfect humanity it brings Him before us as the Son of Man, the One in whom full, perfect and holy Manhood is united with full Deity, for in Him the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. It is fitting that that which speaks of Him in this character should receive prominence in these visions of Ezekiel, for they refer to the time of the kingdom of the Son of Man, when He as that will take up His great power and reign, possessing Himself of the inheritance of which He is the appointed Heir.

6 This next ordinance shows the distinctive place of the Prince. The east gate is opened to him whenever he presents his freewill offering. It seems clear that he fills a representative place, and this being so may not his special privilege suggests the preeminent place of Israel as compared with other nations who come up to the mountain of Jehovah's House?

7 (13-15): The daily burnt-offering

7 And thou shalt [i]daily offer a burnt offering unto Jehovah, a yearling lamb without blemish: morning by morning shalt thou prepare it. And thou shalt prepare a meal offering with it morning by morning, a sixth part of an ephah, and a third part of a hin of oil, to moisten the fine flour: a meal offering unto Jehovah continually by a perpetual ordinance. And they shall offer the lamb, and the meal offering, and the oil, morning by morning for a continual burnt offering.

[i] Ex. 29. 38. Nu. 28. 3.

4(xlvi.16-18): Warning against oppression

4. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, it shall be his inheritance, it shall belong to his sons: it shall be their possession by inheritance. But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his until [k]the year of liberty; then it shall return to the prince; to his sons alone shall his inheritance remain. And the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance to thrust them by oppression out of their possession: he shall give his sons an inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.

[k] Lev. 25.10.

5(xlvi.19-24): Guarding the holy things

5. Then he brought me through the passage which was at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers which were for the priests, which looked toward the north; and, behold, there was a place there at the end westward. And he said unto me, This is the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering; where they shall bake the meal offering: that they bring them not forth unto the outer court to sanctify the people.

7 Finally, the daily burnt-offering is prescribed. In contrast to the Levitical order it is offered in the morning only. The oblation is increased from one-tenth to one-sixth, and the oil from one-quarter of a hin to one-third.

4. Further warning against oppression is given, and the purpose expressed that each preserve his own inheritance. This latter feature is guarded in the regulation concerning the division of the Prince's inheritance. It must remain in his family, so that a portion given to a servant reverts to him in the year of jubilee, or liberty.

5. In this concluding part we are told about the kitchens for the priests and for the people. The care to keep what is priestly from the people is meant surely to maintain a sense on both sides—with the priests and people—of the sanctity of the service of Jehovah, so guarding against all undue familiarity, as a result of which in the past so much had crept in to defile the courts of Jehovah's house.

And he brought me forth unto the outer court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and behold, in every corner of the court there was a court. In the four corners of the court there were courts enclosed, forty [cubits] long and thirty broad: these four corner courts were of one measure. And there was a range round about in them, round about those four, and it was made with boiling places under the ranges round about. And he said unto me, These are the boiling houses where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people.

Section 6 (Chap. xlvii. 1-12.)
The victory over curse

And he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, [l]waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the front of the house was eastward. And the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, south of the altar. And he brought me out by

[l] Ps 46. 4. Joel 3. 18. Zech. 14. 8. *cf.* Jer. 2. 13; 17. 13. Isa. 35. 6, 7; 41. 18; 43. 19; 12. 3. Rev. 22. 1.

Sec. 6.

Brought back to the door of the House the prophet sees waters issue from under its threshold. They flow from the House on the right side, that is, the south, because the prophet stands facing east, or looking toward the altar, so that the south is on his right hand. On the south of the altar he sees the stream flowing eastward. The two east gates being closed he is brought out of the north gate, and led around outside the wall of the outer court to the east gate, and there the water was flowing out on the right side.

The stream is then four times measured at successive points of 1,000 cubits, so that at 4,000 cubits the depth was too great for a man to pass through.

The prophet now traverses the banks of this river, and finds both banks clothed with a luxuriant growth of trees of fadeless leaf and never-failing fruit, supplying medicine and food.

The easterly direction is again noticed (ver. 8), and in addition Ezekiel is told that the river flows into the Dead Sea, healing its waters so that they teem with life, for "everything shall live whither the river cometh." Its waters are waters of life issuing from the Sanctuary of the living God. Only the marshes and pools are not healed; they are reserved as a means of supplying salt.

This whole picture is one that inspires the mind and heart with the bright anticipation of that blessedness of life which will characterize the Millennial earth. Then creation will bear witness to the power and glory of God in a way man has never known since the fall. But let us range a little through the fields of Scripture, for the lesson of these life-giving waters. This symbol of the river meets us at the beginning in the Garden, and we find it again in

> the way of the gate northward, and led me around outside, unto the outer gate towards [the gate] that looketh eastward; and, behold, waters ran out on the right side. When the man went forth eastward, a line was in his hand; and he measured

the glory-scene which closes the inspired volume. Between these far distant points the references are numerous, teaching us lessons of blessing from God and fellowship with Him.

We go to Eden. There are its four rivers. It will repay us, however, to consider a little the whole setting of the wonderful second chapter of Genesis. It furnishes us with features of the Millennial age, which, as the porch to the House, introduces the eternal state, but which being this bears the character of that to which it thus belongs. These visions of Ezekiel, if not giving us the seventh day in the dispensational order, certainly refer to the sixth, and that leads into the sabbath-keeping which remains to the people of God. In the order of creation the sixth day has witnessed the completion of God's work. Suitably it closes with the Head of all set in the place of Lordship over the new scene of blessing. In this we have a type of our blessed Lord, God's Man, to whom all has been subjected, and who will bring all into subjection to Himself. In beautiful sequence to this the seventh day comes in—the day of God's rest. The eternal rest will result from the work of subjugation accomplished by the Second Man, and so He is called "the Father of Eternity" (Isa. ix. 6, *New Trans.*). Of that final rest this first sabbath of the re-fashioned, re-furnished earth is a type. Notice that from this day is omitted the formula constantly repeated on the previous days, "Evening was, and morning was." Is it not as though God would have us understand that in His thought this day should have no end? Blessed be God, that final day will endure eternally. Precious, too, it is to note that on this day God is not occupied with work, or the work done, but with *the day*. He blesses *it*, and sanctifies *it*. Blessed intimation that the eternal day shall have the blessing of God resting upon it with no element of disturbance to intrude.

Three things are mentioned. First, God ended His work — the dawning of the seventh day brought with it the end of His labor. Second, God rested; this is what the day brought in for Him—rest. Third, God blessed and sanctified it. The blessing of the day can alone consist in the delight and satisfaction of God concerning the accomplished work which thus makes rest possible. It is sanctified, in that it is set apart to the enjoyment of this delight and satisfaction. Who shall say what the measure of these things is to be in that sabbath-keeping of God into which His people shall enter with Him?

Apart from redemption we know man could never enter into and enjoy God's rest. This finds illustration in Israel, who as the one nation brought into relation to God on the ground of redemption, is commanded to observe the seventh day—the sabbath, the observance of which is associated with the thought of redemption as typified in the sacrificial system, and by means of priesthood-relation between God and the redeemed. All this finds its fulfilment, both as to redemption and priesthood, in the Lord Jesus. Thus the true and

> a thousand cubits and he caused me to pass through the waters: the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and caused me to pass through the waters: the waters were to the knees. And he measured a thousand and caused me to pass through: the waters were to the loins.

final rest of God, of which Israel's sabbath was a type, is now sure of fulfilment, and secured for God's redeemed people.

A new subject begins in ver. 4 of Genesis ii., that of the relationships in which the new head of creation is placed, in all of which we see him to be a figure of Christ. We see Him here as Heir of all and Ruler over all, with His consort, the Church, of whom the woman is a type; yet may we not also see here a picture of the Son of Man and His kingdom? Following what is plainly introductory, showing how God has acted in view of man, we get the account of the garden—its location and planting, then the river and its parts (of special interest to us now); and finally man's place, service and privileges in the garden. Many details might profitably engage our attention, but we must confine ourselves to noting that the garden is located "eastward *in* Eden." Eden means *delight;* and the east suggests the glory of God. Here too is "every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food"—fullest ministry to satisfy and refresh. In the midst of this the river and its four branches fill an important place. Does it not suggest the ministry of the Spirit from whom alone rivers of living water can flow, and that in a universal character, for all the creation (the four parts), such as shall mark that day to which this whole scene points, including that of Ezekiel's vision, as we have seen? Indeed, Israel can look forward to blessings of the Spirit such as never yet enjoyed. God will put His Spirit within them (Ezek. xxxvi. 27), and pour it out upon them collectively (Isa. xliv. 3), when their time of trial and desolation is over (Isa. xxxii. 15), never to return (Ezek. xxxix. 29). Nor will this blessing be confined to Israel, as Joel plainly predicts, telling us also the time when the outpouring of the Spirit will take place. It will be after God has interposed on behalf of His people, overthrowing the aggressive power of the north, and restoring its fruitfulness to the land. If Eden's rivers then speak of the Spirit and His ministry, let us see what we may learn from a study of them. Should they not teach us the character of His ministry? That we know has for its subject Christ and His things, so this is what comes before us.

Pison, "increase," is first; it compasses the land of Havilah, "anguish," or "travail," where the gold is which is good. Gold is the symbol of God's glory. Increase for eternity has been accomplished by Christ through the encompassment of the land of anguish —the birth-pains of the new creation of which He is the Beginning. There, nevertheless, has been found in all its wealth the glory of God. And if faith now can say, "And the gold of that land is good," how much more in the eternal day! It is added, "There is bdellium and the onyx-stone." The Hebrew word for bdellium means "in trouble," and that for onyx-stone, "their recompense." Here perchance we get a hint of faith's connection with the sufferings of Christ and the glories which follow. It is given to those who find their increase through the anguish of Christ, not only to believe

> And he measured a thousand: it was a river that I could not pass through; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen [this]? And he led me and brought me back to the bank of the river. And

but to suffer for Him; but to suffer leads to being glorified with Him, and so there is both the trouble and the recompense. Both of them bring us in their way into a knowledge of the glory of God.

The second Edenic river is Gihon, "the bringer-forth." It surrounds the whole land of Cush, "terror," or "black." Christ is our Deliverer from the land of our terror and blackness. God in His mercy thus brings out of darkness into marvelous light. If in the first river we read the lesson of the cross from the Godward side—God glorified in Christ—here in the second the enemy is in view. But he is a smitten enemy, all his power has been encompassed, he is annulled, captivity led captive, and now nothing can separate God's redeemed people from His love in Christ Jesus, their Bringer-forth. Thus we can speak of being delivered from the authority of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love. To this end Christ first entered the land of terror and blackness, and came forth as the firstborn from among the dead. Those who believe share in His triumph.

Hiddekel, the third, means "thorn of God." It "goeth in front of Assyria," "a footstep," or "to go forward," and in front lies the thorn of God—the thorn is the significant sign of the curse, which God Himself must bring in because of sin. How man in his every forward move as independent of God, following the inclination of his own will, guided by his own wisdom, meets with the thorn in such a path. Blight falls in some form upon even his greatest and highest achievements, for close by the gourd under which he seeks rest and in which he greatly rejoices, there is the worm which causes it to wither. Then the sultry east wind blows, and man faints. The thorn of God is there. To this creation is subject, and groans. But, thank God, there is deliverance. There is One who has worn the crown of thorn, but who is now crowned with glory and honor. Into His hand all power and judgment has been committed. He has made peace by the blood of the cross. He will remove the blight of sin from creation, and as the Sun of Righteousness chase away all the shadows of its long night, and under His wings of healing grace and power gather all things together in one. Viewing the lesson here from another angle, we may say that because sin and man's ruin brought in the curse, it must be borne, the judgment involved be fully endured, if God's purposes are to go forward to ultimate success. Christ has accomplished the needed work and all is assured. Then it is no wonder that in the fourth place we have Euphrates, "fruitfulness." This is the grand result which shall be made good throughout the length and breadth of the universe.

Are not the features of this picture again before us in Ezekiel? From the house filled with God's glory the river flows out, past the altar of sacrifice where the work of judgment has been accomplished, down to the sea of death, removing its curse, bringing fruitfulness and life where barrenness and death had reigned, for the

when I returned, behold, on the bank of the river were very many [m]trees on the one side and on the other. And he said unto me, These waters issue forth toward the east district, and go down into the [n]Arabah, and go into the sea; when they are brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that every living thing which moveth, whithersoever the double stream shall come, shall live; and there shall

m ver. 12. cf. Rev. 22. 2.

n Or, plain. cf. Deut. 3. 17; 4. 49. Josh. 3. 16.

Deliverer has come out of Zion, and creation sings its Hallelujah. At 4,000 cubits the waters are to swim in—4x10x10x10, the creature brought into the power and blessing of the full manifestation of the divine order as it relates to God and man (the threefold ten).*

These suggestions may help us to see how important a place the rivers fill in instruction as to the blessings of God. But let us go on. We read of the Israelites after the Red Sea crossing, "They came to Elim; and twelve springs of water were there, and seventy palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters." By the way we must pass the bitter waters of Marah—sorrow and trial which the cut down tree cast in makes sweet, but rest is found at Elim where the waters flow, bringing forth abundant fruit and shade realized under the government of God (12=4x3), fully manifest in creative goodness meeting creature weakness, which as realized and bringing us into dependence upon God assures the creature's fullest blessing. Again in this we have the testimony (2) given to God's mastery over evil, the victory of good (6), through His manifest power to bless (12=6x2). Such waters are sweet and unfailing in the joy and provision they supply.

Twice the waters flow from the smitten rock, bringing life and refreshment to Israel's host. On the first occasion the lesson is plainly that of the Cross, by which alone all spiritual blessing is realized. The second time when Moses was told to take the rod of Aaron that budded and speak to the rock, we get a beautiful type of the resources of Christ in resurrection priesthood, through the exercise of which the living waters flow—flow, as we may say, from the throne upon which He sits. No second smiting was needed. In this Moses erred. The one Sacrifice suffices, and in the power of its abiding efficacy, and of life out of death, the waters now flow down from the Sanctuary where He is enthroned. These are still waters beside which He leads, and where the green pastures of blessed ministry and fellowship are found for those who know the Lord to

* In the concluding section of Genesis 2, do we not get a type of all the redeemed creation ranged under the headship of Christ? First we have the counsel of God (ver. 18), then all the animal creation is brought to Adam and he gives them their names. All creation comes into relation to its head, Adam, the figure of Him who was to come, God's Man, the appointed Heir of all things, and the One who as Last Adam is set far above all principality and power and every name named. Notice there are three families mentioned; the cattle, the fowl of the heaven, and the beast of the field. May not this speak to us first of Israel, of whom in the prophets, the domesticated animal is the type; then of heavenly powers; and finally the Gentile nations, of whom the beasts of the field are used in a typical way in Scripture. Lastly we have the man's special helpmeet, suggesting the Church, the Bride of Christ.

be a very great multitude of fish; for these waters shall come thither, and the [waters of the sea] shall be healed; and everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh. And it shall come to pass that fishers shall stand upon it; from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim shall be a place for the spreading of nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of °the great sea, exceeding many. But its marshes and its pools shall not be healed: they shall be given up to salt.

° ch. 48. 28. Num. 34. 6. Josh. 23. 4.

be their Shepherd. He will be so known to Israel, and among the nations in that day to which Ezekiel refers.

Then as the Shepherd of Israel He will feed His flock (Isa. xl. 11: Ezek. xxxvii. 24), for they will no longer refuse "the waters of Shiloah which flow softly" (Isa. viii. 6). Of that day no more beautiful description than that of Isa. xxxv. could be given. "The wilderness and the dry land shall be gladdened; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose...for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and torrents in the desert" ("plain," or Arabah, the same word as in Ezek. xlvii. 8). It is then that "judgment shall roll down as waters, and righteousness as an overflowing stream" (Amos v. 24). Jerusalem shall be a quiet habitation, for there "the mighty Jehovah will be for us a place of rivers" (Isa. xxxiii. 21, *New Trans.*).

These and other passages in the prophets show how the symbol of water is used to express the fulness of blessing and fellowship with God. It is also used of God Himself. Jehovah charges His people with having forsaken Him, "the fountain of living waters" (Jer. ii. 13; xvii. 13). And the figure in this connection finds beautiful application in the words of the prophet, "Blessed is the man that confideth in Jehovah, and whose confidence Jehovah is. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out its roots by the stream, and he shall not see when heat cometh, but his leaf shall be green; and in the year of drought he shall not be careful, neither shall he cease to yield fruit" (Jer. xvii. 7, 8).

In relation to the blessing and glory of the days toward which Ezekiel looks we read, "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them to fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 17; xxi. 6; see *Notes*). Indeed the last passage mentioned gives almost the last gospel invitation in the Book of God, and this may well remind us of how this figure of living water is used to express the precious fulness and permanence of God's grace in His Son (John iv.), while he who receives from His hand this gift of God becomes a vessel from which shall flow "rivers of living water." "This He said concerning the Spirit, which they that believe on Him were about to receive" (John vii. 37-39). Thus we have life from God in the blessed fulness of His grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit presented to us under this figure of water. Truly, it issues out of the Sanctuary, yea, it is the outflow of God, of Christ, of the Spirit. These divine Persons are the Fountains from whence such waters flow, and of whose very being they partake, bringing the recipient into the fulness of God. However true it is that only the

> By the river, upon its bank, on the one side and on the other, shall grow all trees for food, whose leaf shall not wither nor their fruit fail: it shall bring forth new fruit every month, for its waters issue out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for food, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

blessing and glory of Christianity, and so of what is heavenly, fully express the preciousness of this figure, it is also true that the coming age of earth's jubilee will enjoy, in the divinely granted measure, like blessing and fellowship in the power of the Spirit and His ministry as then poured out (Joel ii. 28, 29; Isa. xliv. 3; Ezek. xviii. 31; xxxvii. 1, 14; xxxix. 29).

We must not forget that water is also a figure of the Word of God. So the Lord uses it in John iii. (see *Notes*, pp. 492-494), in John xiii., where it is indispensable for communion. In the laver of the Tabernacle we read the lesson of its important relation to all priestly activity (Exodus, *Notes*, p. 240).

This general testimony of Scripture helps us to see the significance and importance of the river which flows from the Sanctuary in Ezekiel's vision. These thoughts find confirmation as we consider the results of it reaching the Dead Sea—figure as that is of utter barrenness, death, and judgment. The inflow of these living waters so changes all, that life and fruitfulness fill the place of curse and death. Only the stream flowing out from the glory of God, by way of the altar of sacrifice, can transform the wilderness into a garden, overcoming the havoc wrought by sin. Within the limits of the purpose of God "there is nothing—nothing too sunken, too useless, too doomed—but by the grace of God it may be redeemed, lifted and made rich with life." The chief of sinners has been saved, and he is now in glory. Certainly Israel, new-born and blessed with the outflowing stream of life in the Spirit's power, will be as different in her moral and spiritual condition from that of her past history as will be the future physical change of the Dead Sea and its surroundings compared with that of its present existing state.*

Yet the past must be remembered, the work of judgment must not be forgotten: and this will serve its own purpose. "But its marshes and its pools shall not be healed; they shall be given up to salt"—the witness of the inflexible righteousness and changeless holiness of the divine nature, acting in both preservative and sanctifying power. Doubtless from this source of supply will come, as of old, the salt used in the temple service.† God's grace is seasoned with salt—the preservative energy of the divine will.

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* See Appendix.

† "The salt of the Dead Sea was anciently much in request for use in the temple service. It was preferred before all other kinds for its reputed effect in hastening the combustion of the sacrifice, while it diminished the unpleasant smell of the burning flesh. Its deliquescent character (due to the chlorides of alkaline earths it contains) is also noticed in the Talmud" — (Smith's Bible Dictionary).

Section 7 (Chaps. xlvii. 13.—xlviii.).
The perfect Land, for "the Lord is there."

1(xlvii.13-21): The boundaries of the land.

1. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: This shall be the border whereby ye shall allot the land as an inheritance according to the twelve tribes of Israel: [p]Joseph shall have two portions. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another; [the land] concerning which I lifted up my hand [q]to give it to your fathers; and this land shall fall to you for an [r]inheritance.

And this shall be the border of the land: toward the north side, from the great sea by the way of [s]Hethlon unto the entering in of [t]Zedad; [u]Hamath, [v]Berothah, Sibraim which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazar-hatticon, which is by the border of Hauran. And the border from the sea shall be [w]Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward to the border of Hamath: this is the north side. And on the east side between Hauran and Damascus, and Gilead and the land of Israel, the Jordan, from the border unto the east sea, shall ye measure it: this is the east side. And the south side southward, from [x]Tamar to [y]the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, by the torrent, unto the great sea: this is the south side southward. And the west side shall be the great sea from the border as far as over against the entering into Hamath: this is the west side. And ye shall divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel.

p ch. 48. 4, 5. cf. Gen. 49. 22–26, 1 Chron. 5. 1, 2.
q ch. 20. 5, 6, 28, 42; 36. 7. Gen. 12. 7; 13. 14, 15; 15: 18–21; 17. 8; 26. 3; 28. 13; 50. 24. Ex. 3. 17. Deut. 34. 4. Acts 7. 5.
r ch. 48. 29.
s ch. 48. 1.
t Num. 34. 8.
u Num. 34. 8.
v 2 Sam. 8. 8.
w ch. 48. 1. Num. 34. 9.
x ch. 48. 28.
y Num. 20. 12, 13, 24. Deut. 32. 51; 33. 8. Ps. 81. 7.

Sec. **7.**

1. This final section begins with giving the boundaries of the land. These are essentially the same as those given in Num. xxxiv. 1-15. There is the difference that in Numbers the southern boundary is given first, whereas here we begin with the north. In both cases the Jordan forms the eastern line, the settlement of the two and a half tribes east of the river being a departure from the original plan. This is not given any place in the final arrangement, all the tribes being given their inheritance west of the Jordan.

We may note that Joseph is given two portions—Manasseh and Ephraim. This fulfils Gen. xlviii. 5, 6; and according to 1 Chron. v. 1, the birthright forfeited by Reuben was given to the sons of Joseph. Since he has two portions the number of the tribes remains twelve, although Levi is not counted, his inheritance being part of the heave-offering.

2 (22, 23): Care for the stranger

2. And it shall come to pass that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and for [z]the strangers who sojourn among you, who shall beget children among you; and they shall be unto you as the home-born among the children of Israel: with you they shall draw by lot inheritance among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord Jehovah.

z cf. Ex. 22. 21; 23. 9. Lev. 17. 8, 10. 13; 20. 2; 22. 18; 25. 45. Deut. 10. 18, 19; 24. 14, 17, 21. Ps. 146. 9. Isa. 14. 1; 60. 4, 5, 10. Jer. 7. 6; 22. 3. cfr. ch. 22. 7, 29.

3 (xlviii. 1-7): The tribes north of the sacred Oblation

3. And these are the names of the tribes: from the north end along the way of Hethlon as one entereth into Hamath, Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus northward unto near Hamath; and they shall have their sides east and west, Dan one [portion]. And by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west side, Asher one. And from the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, Naphtali one. And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, Manasseh one. And from the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, Ephraim one. And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side unto the west side, Reuben one. And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, Judah one.

4 (8-22) The sacred Oblation, the universal centre of glory, government and worship.

4. And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the heave offering that ye shall offer, five and twenty thousand in breadth, and in length as one of the portions from

2. In addition to prescribing the division of the land to the tribes, the strangers who have settled themselves among them and begotten children among them are to receive inheritance with the tribes. The word for "stranger" here is different from that used in chap. xliv. 7, where the word signifies "sons of the alien," or "foreigner," really those brought in through Israel's unholy mixture with the evil nations around. Here it is one who, though not naturally one of the tribes, has cast in his lot among them. Such are to be as the home-born, and have their inheritance by lot in the tribe in which they live.

3-5. We next have the order of the tribes, first those north of the heave-offering (1-7), then that offering itself is described (8-22), followed by the tribes to the south (23-28). It will be of interest to compare the relations of the tribes as first settled in the land, and this final disposition. Chaps. xiii.-xxi of Joshua give in detail the first allotment of the inheritance, and this has been fully considered in its place. Here it seems only needful to emphasize the relation of the tribes to one another.

the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it. The heave offering that ye shall offer unto Jehovah shall be five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth. And for these, even for the priests, shall be the holy heave offering, toward the north five and twenty thousand, and toward the west the breadth ten thousand, and toward the east, the breadth ten thousand, and toward the south, the length five and twenty thousand: and the sanctuary of Jehovah shall be in the midst of it. [It shall be] for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok, who have kept my charge; who went not astray when the children of Israel went astray as the Levites went astray. And it shall be unto them a heave offering from the heave offering of the land, a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.

First, in bringing Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh from the east side of Jordan* an element of division is removed which formerly existed in the nation, and a feature not originally a part of God's order. Thus national unity and solidarity are established—divided interests and natural barriers overcome.

Reuben formerly separated from Judah by the expanse of the Dead Sea is now situated next to him. Benjamin who stood between Judah and Ephraim is removed to the south, bounding on that side the holy heave-offering. Manasseh, once divided, is now united and placed immediately north of his brother tribe, Ephraim. Asher, Naphtali, and Dan remain in the north, but Zebulun and Issachar are located in the south, and with them, Gad, who was formerly east of the Jordan. The division of Dan disappears. Simeon remains in the south.

It is noticeable that Judah and Benjamin, the tribes that remained faithful to David's house, are honored by nearest relation to the glorious centre of the Messianic kingdom. "Them that honor Me will I honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."

Now let us see what spiritual instruction may be gathered from this new arrangement of the tribes. They are in two groups, one of *seven* and one of *five*. It seems evident that we must seek the lesson in this very division, and consider them in the order of a first and second to which the numbers seven and five apply respectively. Group one should yield us truth suited to that number, and also seven; group two, what suits that and five.

First, the whole number of the tribes, twelve, speaks of manifest divine government over all creation in realized mastery over evil. Since this is divided into two parts, we may think of a full witness being given to this in the perfection and completeness (7) of the position in which God sets His redeemed people—a position of right-

* Compare the map of Canaan with that of the new arrangement. See Appendix.

> And answering to the border of the priests, the Levites shall have five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: the whole length shall be five and twenty thousand, and the breadth, ten thousand. And they shall not sell of it, nor exchange it, nor shall the first fruits of the land be alienated: for it is holy unto Jehovah.

eousness and blessing in harmony with the divine attributes and sovereignty (1); and then in the fellowship, service, and relationship (2) in which they are placed in happy union with God, God and His creature reconciled (5 = 4 + 1). With these general thoughts before us, let us see what lessons the first group of seven tribes may teach us. They are in order as given us from the north:

1. Dan.
2. Asher.
3. Naphtali.
4. Manasseh.
5. Ephraim.
6. Reuben.
7. Judah.

In Jacob's prophecy (Gen. xlix.) we read in connection with Dan of Satanic character, the power of evil in manifestation. This can only be met and overcome by Jehovah's salvation, and for this Jacob expresses earnest desire. But despite Dan's evil character the prophetic assurance that he shall judge his people points to restoration and the realization of self-government, as far as the nation is concerned, when the day of the lawless one, the false Messiah, is over —a personage linked with Dan it would seem from this very prophecy. So in Dan's blessing as pronounced by Moses we have suggested the power that overcomes the enemy. His name means "judge," or "judging," and he stands for the spirit of rule which must necessarily be realized through the lesson of *self*-rule, self-judgment, self-government, and this means the truth applied to the whole man. Little does Dan's history express this, rather is it entirely in contrast to what his character should be. It is this which makes what Jacob yearns for in speaking of him such a necessity—Jehovah's salvation. This alone can meet the condition in which man is found, unable to rule himself (or the creation over which he was set as head at the first), dominated by the evil of his own heart, carried about by every wind of Satanic influence, he shows a character and power like that of the serpent. Self-judgment, self-government alone become possible through submission to another will and power, that of God revealed in Christ. Thus man comes into his true place and dignity —the enemy overcome, mastery through grace secured, the dominion of sin broken as made free by the Son. This is the first step in the cycle of divine blessing and perfection.

It quite naturally leads to the second as expressed in Asher, "the happy," for *this* man becomes when once reconciled to God by the death of His Son. As thus turned from Satan unto God, he enters the kingdom of the Son of God's love. There he enjoys fellowship with Him, finding in His shadow rapture and rest, His fruit sweet to our taste and His banner over us love (Song ii. 3, 4, *New Trans.*). Truly of such it can be said, as of Asher, "His bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties" (Gen. xlix. 20). Jehovah's salvation brings us the bread of life, the food of the mighty. His blessing is that of living fruit, brotherly fellowship, spiritual power in walk,

> And the five thousand that are left in the breadth in front of the five and twenty thousand, shall be a common [place] for the city, for dwellings and for suburbs; and the city shall be in the midst thereof. And these shall be the measures thereof: the north side, four thousand and five hundred, and the south side, four thousand and five hundred, and the east side, four thousand and five hundred, and the west side, four thousand and five hundred. And the suburbs of the city

and divine strength, as we may learn from the blessing of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25). "It is of immense importance that the people of God should be known as a 'happy' people. If 'the joy of the Lord is your strength,' then happiness must have for the soul a large spiritual value. As a testimony to God it can be no less. One of the characteristics of the true 'circumcision,' as given by the apostle, is that they 'rejoice in Christ Jesus:' and his exhortation to the same people is, 'Rejoice in the Lord; and again, I say, Rejoice' (Phil. iii. 3; iv. 4). Such joy is one of the best signs that the knowledge of the gospel has reached the heart, and that the life will be governed by it. It is quite true that feelings may be put in a wrong place, as in the first quest of peace they are almost sure to be. There is plenty of need for insisting on the truth that we are not justified by feeling but by faith. Nay, it is certain that the reception of the gospel with *immediate* joy is made by the Lord Himself a sign rather of stony-ground hearing than of a fruitful reception of the Word (Matt. xiii. 20). Plowing up must be before the seed can spring up aright; repentance before God will accompany 'faith in our Lord Jesus Christ' where the latter is real and effective. This is all true; yet, on the other hand, it is no less true that the effect of the gospel—the 'glad tidings'—is to produce gladness, and that the apostle prays for believers that 'the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing' (Rom. xv. 13). The third character of the 'kingdom of God' he gives, after 'righteousness and peace,' is 'joy in the Holy Ghost' (ch. xiv. 17). 'The fruit of the Spirit is' said to be 'love, *joy*, peace' (Gal. v. 22). 'And not only so, but we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom* we have now received the reconciliation' (Rom. v. 11). These passages, of course, define the happiness which they speak of, so that it is impossible to confound it with the mere play of animal spirits, or even the happiness derivable from the hope of salvation. One might have this last, and yet in fact be unsaved. *'Joy in God through Christ'* is something perfectly distinct and infinitely higher" (Joshua, *Notes*, pp. 145, 146). In this connection another lesson may be noticed in Asher following Dan. If Dan speaks of self-rule, self-judgment, we know this means exercise of heart and conscience, and these are essential to the maintenance of a happiness worthy of the name.

This brings us to Naphtali which means "my wrestling," not so much with the idea of this going on but as having reached a conclusion in victory, bringing freedom. It expresses the blessedness of that new place in which man finds himself, as Moses declares of Naphtali, "satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the

> shall be toward the north, two hundred and fifty, and toward the south, two hundred and fifty, and toward the east, two hundred and fifty, and toward the west, two hundred and fifty. And the residue in length, alongside the holy heave offering, shall be ten thousand eastward and ten thousand westward: it shall be alongside the holy

Lord," so that he becomes as "a hind let loose," all fear removed, and the tongue loosed to give goodly words which are the sacrifices of the lips confessing His name (Heb. xiii. 15). Is not this the first-fruits of the Spirit, the blessing and triumph of Romans 8? This fittingly fills the third place in the cycle of perfection and completeness.

Following on we come to Manasseh, "forgetting"—not in a mere negative sense, but after the manner of the apostle who was "forgetting the things behind," as absorbed with the glory opened through faith to the vision of his mind and the affections of his heart. Thus for him the rule became, "For me to live is Christ." Naphtali leads us to Manasseh, to that soleness of object and whole-heartedness of life which finds its portion in the things above, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This is the manner of walk that results from being in the sanctuary where, like Naphtali, we are made "full with the blessing of the Lord."

Is it any wonder that Ephraim, "fruitfulness," comes next? It must, it ever does, in such a cycle of blessing as we are considering, and since Manasseh and Ephraim are the sons of Joseph we may turn to what is said of him to learn more fully what belongs to them (Gen. xlix. 22-26; Deut. xxxiii. 13-17). Plainly Christ is very much before us in Joseph, and what is the fruitbearing of the divine life in man but the being conformed to *His* image, changed from glory to glory by the power and energy of the Spirit's transforming work? The wealth of figure and expression used to tell the portion of Joseph, and so of Manasseh and Ephraim, witnesses to the greatness of the abiding power, grace, and blessing reached as we advance in the knowledge of God's thoughts concerning the perfection and completeness of His redeemed people.

Our course brings us to Reuben with whom the excellency and dignity of sonship in its virgin freshness find expression. Such was man unfallen, fresh from the hand of God; but he showed himself unstable as water; like Reuben he fell. But Moses can say, "Let Reuben live and not die, and let not his men be few." Though worthy of death, the way of life has been opened to sinful man, and now by faith in Christ Jesus he receives that sonship which is of higher order and richer blessing than the dignity lost through sin. It is "according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has taken us into favor in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of His grace." This is victory indeed, so Reuben fitly fills the sixth place.

We end with Judah, "praise." "We find the spirit of *praise* is that of *power*—necessarily, because God is exalted in it. It is what the fiftieth psalm challenges on His part from His people: 'Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High....

> heave offering; and the increase thereof shall be for food for them that labor in the city. And they that labor in the city out of all the tribes of Israel shall till it. The whole heave offering shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand; ye shall offer the holy heave offering foursquare with the possession of the city.

whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.' It is this which marks the life that comes from God, that it turns back to God again; and the joy of the Lord is ever its principle of strength. A simple lesson, but, oh, that it were learnt! The 'wine' in the portion of Judah is the sign of a joy in which there can be no excess; and the milk may show that here there is not merely stimulus, but nourishment as well, and that in the form in which the merest babe may find it" (Genesis, *Notes*, p. 129). Throughout Scripture praise is presented as a marked characteristic of God's redeemed people; it brings us to the completeness of that salvation with which we began in Dan. Let us also remember that the spirit of praise is the spirit of obedience, for it is to be rendered with the understanding, with the soul, and with the whole heart in uprightness, the whole man is to be in the power of it, and this means to find God with us, for He delights to dwell amid the praises of His people. When the heart is thus fixed, and God fills it, it will be His throne; His judgments will be known and His Word kept. Then the place of our inheritance will be found in immediate connection with the Sanctuary as with Judah here, his border joins that of the holy heave-offering where the throne-house of Jehovah stands.

In this cycle of blessing we have traced precious truths of God's great love and grace which apply to all who are His redeemed, to all to whom the new covenant is made good, as it is to us now and will be to Israel in that coming day to which Ezekiel's vision refers.

But we must now see what instruction we may gather from the second and southerly group of tribes. There the order is:

1. Benjamin. 2. Simeon. 3. Issachar.
4. Zebulun. 5. Gad.

In the first group of seven we learn the glorious perfection of the position grace gives. It is God's purposes and work whereby new creation is accomplished. This is a real bringing out of darkness into His own marvelous light, and thus we reach the Sanctuary as we move onward from Judah. Passing through its holy precincts we come to this second group which, as a second, we might expect to teach us, as already remarked, lessons of relationship and fellowship regarding the divine life. Being a series of five it should show how God (1) is found with His saved creature (4) for the control of its way, the strength of its life, and the enlargement of its capacity to know Himself through the union thus established in His grace. This of necessity brings into the meaning of this number creature-responsibility and the exercise occasioned by being under the government of God. So from the precincts of the Sanctuary we enter Benjamin, "son of the right hand." This suggests the place of power and privilege in known relationship. Moses declares his blessing, "The

> And the rest shall be for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy heave offering and of the possession of the city, in front of the five and twenty thousand of the heave offering toward the east border, and westward in front of the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, answering to the portions: it shall be for the prince; and the holy heave offering and the sanctuary of the house shall be in the midst thereof. And from the possession of the Levites and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which shall be the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince.

beloved of Jehovah shall dwell in safety by Him: He shall cover him all day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders." Here is dearness, nearness, security, the overshadowing of Almighty power, and rest as borne up on the shoulders of infinite love. True as this is in a special way of the Church, it will be Israel's special glory too in the coming age. But all of this for us is connected with the truth of Christ in us, for because we are sons God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, and in this is all our power on earth for the activities of the divine life in fellowship with God whom we now know as Father. It is thus we come to know Christ lives in us, and we not only glory in Him, but we accept Him for ourselves, God having accepted Him for us.

Easily enough we pass to Simeon, "hearing." This suggests communion, Mary's place at the feet of Jesus hearing His word. "Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors" (Prov. viii. 34). In this Wisdom speaks, but we know that Christ is the wisdom of God, and that He has been made wisdom unto us; and He is the Word. To thus hear is to delight ourselves in Him. It is truly the way of life, and this leads us into what is connected with Issachar.

From Jacob's prophecy we see that Issachar stands for yoke-bearing, though evidently in a slavery that speaks of fleshly indulgence and the vain reward of sin's pleasure for a season. Here, however, we are rather to think of deliverance through grace from such servitude, as coming to the One whose loving voice calls us to hear and find the true rest. Thus coming under His yoke and learning from Him (Matt. xi. 29, *New Trans.*)—the meek and lowly One who stooped to bear *our* burden and carry our sorrows, even unto death, the death of the cross—we enter a new service, sanctified by the word of truth we have heard and received, finding in this way the true reward, for "If any man will serve Me, him will My Father honor." Isaachar means, "There is reward." Thus the blessing of Issachar is realized, for, as Moses declares, he sounds God's call to the peoples to come to "the mountain," surely the mountain of the Lord's house, there to offer the sacrifices of *righteousness*, a service, a yoke-bearing so different from that of the past, both for Issachar and those to whom he carries the invitation. And this is ever the

5 (23-29): The tribes south of the sacred Oblation

5. And as for the rest of the tribes: from the east side unto the west side, Benjamin one [portion]. And by the border of Benjamin from the east side unto the west side, Simeon one. And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar one. And by the border of Issachar, from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun one. And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad one. And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be from Tamar to the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, by the torrent, unto the great sea. This is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, saith the Lord Jehovah.

order according to God, that communion (Simeon) should issue in such service. The heart that is full of the Word must overflow in ministry to others, calling them to the place where the fulness of God is found. Issachar, then, in this third place may well speak of walking in the *Spirit*, sanctified by Him by means of the Word of truth so that we manifest in our walk His fruit. In this our true recompense, "reward," will be found both now and for eternity.

The Lord assures those who take His yoke and learn from Him that they will find rest unto their souls, and so we pass into Zebulun, "dwelling with," a doing so in intimacy, as Leah's words intimate when giving this name. "For where I am there will My servant be also." Is not this John xiv.? "If any one love Me, he will keep My word (this indeed is what the communion of Simeon and the service of Issachar involve), and My Father will love him, and We will come and make our abode with him." Because the apostle so well knew this "dwelling with," he could say out of the richness of his experience, "*My* God shall abundantly supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." What a rich gathering of precious and priceless store this means, and so we end this series with Gad, "*a gatherer*:" a glorious fifth in which the need of the creature is supplied out of the exhaustless treasuries of the divine glory! Alongside the ever-abiding sufficiency of God we have the two governing principles for His people by which sufficency is appropriated — *dependence* and *obedience*. "Be careful about nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God that surpasses every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus... What ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. iv. 6-9).

Thus we reach Gad, the place of *increase*, for that thought is associated with the meaning of his name. Our truest and fullest enlargement must be found in being with God, who did not spare His own Son that with Him we might receive all things. It is of His fulness that we receive, and grace upon grace.

6 (30-35): The gates of the city

6. And these are the goings out of the city. On the north side, four thousand and five hundred by measure. And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward: the gate of Reuben, one; the gate of

6. We are now told about the gates of the city.* They are named after the twelve tribes. It is a city in which all have their part and special interest. All ancient jealousies, all strife for place, are over; unity and concord prevail with each one in his ordered place. What we have just considered will help us to the understanding of the spiritual meaning.

We may note that Manasseh and Ephraim have their gate in Joseph. This permits Levi to have a gate bearing his name. Here, too, the association of the tribal names is different from the order of succession in the land. The prominent lesson here would appear to be in connection with the side on which they occur—north, east, south, or west. In placing the names it seems clear that we are to begin at the west corner of the north side and proceed eastward, so passing around the entire city.

We have had occasion to consider the quarters of the heaven in the book of Numbers in connection with the encampment of the tribes around the Tabernacle (Vol. 1, pp. 388-393). The significance there given we may use here: "The north (*tsaphon*) means 'what is hidden,' and the reason why the north is called so is because to those living in the northern hemisphere the sun travels through the southern heavens, and the north side of anything is the dark side. Naturally the north itself would be contemplated as the seat of darkness, the abode of gloom and mystery....And this mystery, how it assaults us! From the north come the most frequent attacks upon the land, and from it will come the final attack (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.). In the sides of the north the Babylonian apostate makes his seat and utters his defiance of the Almighty (Isa. xiv.). We must not imagine this to be without significance. Nothing in Scripture is; and it is by putting things together that we perceive a meaning which taken by themselves such things might seem to lack. Certainly in the place of mystery it is that apostasy and infidelity intrench themselves most securely; while upon the forehead of Babylon the Great there is also written 'Mystery.'" Thus the north tells of mystery, the power of evil, the judgment of God, His ways in providence too, which so often awaken exercise and leave man in his wisdom utterly baffled, and, as we have also seen, it is the place of slaying the sacrifice which speaks of the cross with all its horror of great darkness, but through which after all we come into the knowledge of the wisdom and power of God, so the dark shadow is lifted from His face and there is light from Him which "removes all guilty fear and love begets." In this quarter we get Reuben, the excellency of sonship, with which there is the blessed unfolding of the purposes of God, and Judah, for all of this is to the praise of His glory, yea, the glory of His grace, making His people an ever thankful and praising people. They have a triumph-song to sing in the face of the north, for God is for us, and who can separate us from His

* See Diagram of the city gates in the Appendix.

> Judah, one; the gate of Levi, one. And at the east side, four thousand and five hundred, and three gates: even the gate of Joseph, one; the gate of Benjamin, one; the gate of Dan, one. And at the south side, four thousand and five

love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? So we now have Levi, "joined." Forevermore it is Christ and those who are His, His companions, co-heirs, ever together with Him who is the Firstborn among many brethren, the Captain of salvation with His host of sons, all things *with* Him. Glorious truth! How it thrills the soul and fills the lips with praise "to Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father: to Him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen!"

We turn to the east, which we have already seen is connected with the glory of God. There the sun rises, and this always suggests the idea of joy and blessing with the returning day. But the word for east is *qedem*, "what faces," or "confronts" you, and thus, as nearly as may be, resembles our word "adversity" from the Latin, "what is *toward*" you, only in a hostile manner. The *qadim*, the "east wind," is the dry and parching wind from the desert, as the west wind is literally the sea-wind, bringing moisture and rain. These two contrary thoughts to us as Christians so suggest one another that there is no difficulty in their connection. He who faces in earnest the evil of the world will have proportionately before him that appearing of Christ which will bring its long disorder to an end forever. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand; blessed be God, we who believe in Him are children of the day; "therefore," says the apostle, "let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom. xiii. 12). In this quarter we have Joseph, beautiful type of Christ in all the lowly grace of His humiliation, and then the surpassing glory of His place at the right hand of the Majesty on high—the sufferings of Him who was separated from His brethren, and the glories that followed. These two things are in their measure true of the redeemed, for they learn to suffer with Him and are glorified together, then shall they be conformed perfectly to His image: here the lessons of Manasseh and Ephraim combine, for in the light of the glory and as absorbed with it, pressing forward to it, we "forget" the adverse and evil world, with the result that the mind of Christ possesses us and we become "fruitful" in the power of the Spirit. Benjamin follows—"Christ in us the hope of glory," so there is present power to overcome: and lastly on this side, Dan who stands for the spirit of rule and judgment. Only do we form a right judgment of the world and of ourselves as we enter into what Joseph and Benjamin speak of, and so too learn how to rule, thereby gaining capacity to rule with Him in the day of glory when the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, bringing an end to all opposition. How good to be familiar with the gateways that enter eastward, as well as those of the north.

We have had occasion to speak of the south as indicative of relaxing influences, of the way of the world and the pleasures of sin by which men seek to escape from dependence upon and exercise under the hand of God. But this only brings spiritual drought, the soul is

> hundred by measure and three gates: the gate of Simeon, one; the gate of Issachar, one; the gate of Zebulun, one. At the west side, four thousand and five hundred, and their three gates: the gate

parched and barrenness results. In accord with this the word for south is *negeb* which means "to be parched," and is applied to the south because of its drought. In this connection we may well think of the discipline of God as exercised over His people, by which they come to know Him better and are made partakers of His holiness and serve Him in righteousness. The patriarchs in their wanderings southward learned these ways of God, and so do we. Here, then, we first have Simeon, "hearing," and we cannot help but think of that word, "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it" (Mic. vi. 9). Submission leads into communion, of which Simeon speaks, and this to that obedient, willing service that brings reward (Issachar): then we find the green pastures and still waters whither our Shepherd leads by rod and staff where we rest with Him (Zebulun).

Turning westward we face the sea. "Westward in Hebrew means 'toward the sea.' And the sea is preeminently in Scripture, as in nature, the type of trouble and unrest, which the word itself signifies in the original. We have seen it in the six days' work the type of the evil within us, and which remains in us though regenerate, limited, however, by divine grace. It is the evil, moreover, in the negative rather than its positive aspect, and the west wind, as the sea-wind, differs from the east wind, the wind of the desert, in this way. It comes not to wither, but rather loaded with the moisture that revives and refreshes the earth. This is the answer of heaven to the appeal of man's misery, even though that misery be in a certain sense identified with his sin. As the heaven draws from the bosom of the sea itself the vapors which it pours out again upon the land, so grace is that with which God in sovereign goodness has answered our sin, and the *occasion* of which has been the very sin itself; for only in a world of sinners could He show grace. How full and exact are these natural types when we come to analyze them." It is just out of this that we are able to gather our increase (Gad, "a gatherer"), and find our genuine happiness (Asher, "happy"), and in our wrestling overcome, finding victory over all the subtle influences of this world's things, learn in fact not to love them, as John speaks, and that our faith is the victory that gets the victory over the world.

Perhaps we should not pass without notice the oft-repeated measurement of each side—4,500 (45 [5x9] x 10x10). Here *nine* appears as an important factor. As being 3x3 it signifies the full manifestation of what is divine, its complete display. It has been suggested that as the last of the digits it signifies the end or conclusion of a matter. This brings in the idea of perfection and completeness (7), to which competent testimony (2) is given in the display. This fits well with Ezekiel's vision in which we have traced the summation of God's thoughts as to man's blessing in relation with Himself. So in another way it is all that five speaks of added to the four—the number of the creature and creation. This again is intensified by five, making the forty-five, and this whole is multiplied twice by ten

of Gad, one; the gate of Asher, one; the gate of Naphtali, one. It shall be eighteen thousand round about.

7 (35): The Name of the City

7. And the [a]name of the city from that day shall be, [b]Jehovah is there.

[a] *cf.* Jer. 23. 6; 33. 16. Isa. 48. 7; 62. 2, 12. Deut 12. 5; 16. 2, 6, 11; 26. 2.

[b] *cf.* Jer 3.17; ch. 37.26-28. Isa. 60. 9-11. Joel 3. 17, 21; Zech. 8. 3; Rev. 21. 3.

—a full and competent witness to the accomplishment of divine order in all relations Godward and manward. This shows us the character of the Millennial metropolis, and the government of the kingdom; this agrees with the general testimony of Scripture. The same thoughts appear in the final measurement, "It shall be 18,000 round about" (18 [9x2] x 10 x 10 x 10).

7. The name of the city — JEHOVAH SHAMMAH — Jehovah is there.

APPENDIX

THE LOCATION OF THE SANCTUARY AND THE ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND.*

The location of the Sanctuary and the arrangement of the tribes in relation to it, are given in chap. 48. We begin at the north with Dan, and six tribes follow him in succession toward the south (vers. 1-7). Then we have what is called "the heave offering." This has three main parts, and these claim special consideration since they are in immediate relation to the Sanctuary. Five tribes follow this "heave offering," thus completing the division to the southern limits of the land.

The "heave offering" is of first importance since the Sanctuary enclosure is within its bounds. It is foursquare, 25,000 by 25,000, divided into three main parts; 25,000 by 10,000 for the priests, 25,000 by 10,000 for the Levites, and 25,000 by 5,000 for the city and environs. Then the Prince's portion is mentioned as being on the east and west of this great square, reaching to the eastern and western boundaries of the land. The Sanctuary enclosure is in the priests' portion. While these numbers are given, a question at once confronts us: are they reeds or cubits? In the text of chapter 48 this is not stated. Can it be determined from other parts of the vision?

In chap. 45:1-8 we find another detailed specification of the several parts which form this heave offering, but here again the reed and the cubit are not mentioned in giving the dimensions, with one exception; 50 cubits are allowed as open space around the 500 by 500 (something) for the Sanctuary (ver. 2). That cubits are mentioned in the one item seems to imply that the measures in the other cases are of a different denomination. Turning now to chap. 42:15-20 we are told that after completing the measurement of the inner house, the prophet was brought toward the gate fronting east. Here a space with a wall was measured as being 500 by 500 reeds. This made a separation between what was holy and what was common. This appears to

* See Map in the following pages.

determine the allotted space of chap. 45:2 to be 500 *reeds*, surrounded by a free or open space of 50 cubits.* If this conclusion is correct then we may determine that the other measurements are to be taken as reeds. This conclusion seems the only reasonable one when we consider that 5,000 by 5,000 (something) is given for the city (48:15, 17). If these were cubits the city would be no more than about 1.136 miles square—a very insignificant place of little more than one and a quarter square miles. Taking the measurement as reeds—the reed is six cubits, 40:5; 43:13—we have a city more fitting in size to the glory of the millennial kingdom: it would be about 6.81 miles square, or cover nearly 47 square miles.†

Before going further let us consider the size of the cubit used in determining these dimensions. We know the cubit was used in Babylonia and Egypt. In the latter there is evidence of its use from very early times in two forms—the common or commercial cubit of six handbreadths, and the royal one of seven handbreadths. Ezekiel specifies the cubit used in measuring the Sanctuary as a cubit and a handbreadth, which some think points to a measure similar to the Egyptian royal cubit of seven handbreadths. From the monuments and other remains a length of 17.68 inches has been fixed for the Egyptian short cubit, and 20.63 for the long. It is not possible to determine that the Hebrew cubit was identical with that of Egypt, and it does not seem probable, for if either of these cubits is used to determine the measurements of the oblation, it is not possible to place this allotment within the boundaries of the land itself as given in chap. 47.

This "holy heave offering foursquare with the possession of the city" [i.e., the 25,000 by 20,000, plus 25,000 by 5,000] (ver. 20) is bounded on the north by Judah, and on the south by Benjamin (48:8, 22, 23; see map); but from ver. 8 it would appear that this *holy* offering is part of another and somewhat larger offering, not specifically called holy, which while 25,000 reeds in breadth from north to south, and thus exactly the same as the holy heave offering in this direction, is "in length as one of the parts [i.e., of the tribes] from

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* These 50 cubits that surround the Sanctuary plot would appear to be for the purpose of preventing the priests' houses being built against the enclosing wall. This impresses the lesson of the sanctity of the Sanctuary precincts, the separation from anything relatively common, a fundamental lesson of these visions.

† The fact, too, that Levi, one of the tribes, has his entire inheritance as part of the heave offering (10,000 x 25,000) argues for the reed against the cubit. Were it the latter he would not have more than 15 square miles, while all the other tribes would have from about 800 to over 1,000 square miles, as shown on the map.

the east side unto the west side." This larger offering, then, extended from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the eastern boundary of the land, or in other words, to the Jordan and the Dead Sea; and this larger offering included the holy heave offering of 25,000 by 25,000 reeds with the Prince's portions, one on each side, extending from the line of the holy offering to the east and west borders of the land, and stretching from the border of Judah to that of Benjamin. This appears clear from vers. 20-23. In fact no other arrangement seems possible if we follow the requirements of the text. These verses also confirm another point—the location of the priests' portion. The Sanctuary, it is said, is in the midst of the offering (vers. 8, 21). From chap. 45:3, 4 we know that the Sanctuary was in the priests' portion, which was 25,000 by 10,000, and therefore this must be the central division of the holy heave offering since the Sanctuary is in the midst of the whole offering. Then on one side of this is the Levites' portion, also 25,000 by 10,000; and on the other the city and its possessions—25,000 by 5,000. As to whether the Levites were on the north side, and the city on the south, or the reverse, we will consider a little later.

Now, as already mentioned, the west side is the Great Sea, the Mediterranean (47:20); and the east side is formed by the Jordan and the East, or Dead, Sea: that is, at that part of the land where this offering would be located. This then limits the 25,000 to the territory between these established boundaries. We have taken the 25,000 to be reeds, and this would be equivalent to 150,000 cubits. If these cubits are calculated of the longer Egyptian form, the 25,000 reeds would equal slightly less than 49 miles. This would extend west to east, beyond the limits of the land by several miles. On the other hand if we limit the cubit to the common or smaller form, which is about 18 inches, the plot of 25,000 reeds would just fall within the prescribed boundaries, but leaves no land for the Prince which, as we have already determined, is on the east and west sides of the offering between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin.

To solve this problem I have adopted the sizes of the cubit given by Dr. W. Shaw Caldecott. He has given this subject of measurement an exhaustive examination. He says,

> "It is a commonly held opinion that the cubit of the Bible is one of eighteen inches in length. This is based on the fact of its being the common denominator of all the spaces in the best known of Babylonian ruins . . . In the absence of later and fuller light upon the matter, it has, therefore, been understood that the cubit of the Bible was half a yard in length. But further light is

derivable from the other three columns of the Senkereh Tablet.* This does not contradict, but confirms the evidence already before us, and adds to it the additional information that an 18-inch cubit was not the only one used; but that there were two others of lesser length, all three of which were commensurate with one another.

"The second column of the tablet (the first having been devoted to the palm†) is limited to the various extensions of the palm into an ell, or cubit, of three palms. This is that which is represented on the statue of Gudea,‡ the cardinal fact in relation to these two antiques being, that the fractions, formed by the cuts in the stone, are those which are represented by the figures and hieroglyphs of the clay tablet. This coincidence—often repeated—is the proof that both these spoils of the pick-axe and the spade belong to one system of measures, and that they are complementary to one another. By their collation and agreement, it has been established, *nemine contradicente*, that in Babylonia there were three ells [or, cubits], respectively of 3, 4 and 5 palms' length; the evidence on this behalf being completed by the fact that the third column of the tablet is one of 4 palms', and the fourth column one of 5 palms'.

"We thus obtain, from a fundamental palm-breadth of 3.6 inches, the three measures of 10.8, 14.4 and 18 inches."

Dr. Caldecott is of the opinion that these measures were those of Palestine, and that they were used in the construction of the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple.

"Care, however, must be taken to observe the rule that each of the three cubits is confined to its own department—the larger to land spaces, the middle to buildings, and the smallest to gold work."

These considerations show that we have three cubits of which the shortest one, that of three handbreadths, or palms, equalling 10.8 inches, is the fundamental or basic measure. With this system of measures Ezekiel would doubtless be quite familiar either from the knowledge of its use in Palestine, or acquaintance with it through

* This tablet is a small square of unbaked clay, 7½ inches by 5¾ inches in size, written on both sides of its upper and under surfaces, in closely packed rows and columns of figures. These divide themselves, on the one side, into four separate columns, each of six perpendicular rows of numerals and mathematical characters. It is in these four columns of cuneiform that we find the fuller light by which we detect three cubits of different lengths, each used in its own department of work.

† A basic measure of 3.6 inches.

‡ "In the year 1881, a French explorer in Babylonia discovered, in the courtyard of an ancient palace, a number of headless statues. These are now in the Louvre Museum. One of the sitting figures has on his knees a slab bearing the ground plan of an early royal residence, which stood on the same site as that in which it was found. On this slab, of hard diorite, is engraved a representation of the measure by which the palace was built. This measure was found, on examination, to have been ten and four-fifths English inches in length, and to have been divided into two main portions, one of which is twice the length of the other. The smaller portion is thus 3.6 inches [or, one palm], and the larger, 7.2 inches in length [or, two palms, so that this measure of three palms is equivalent to the smallest of the three ells, or cubits, found on the Senkereh mathematical tablet]."

his long residence in Babylonia. Now he is quite explicit in stating what is the unit of measurement in his visions of the Sanctuary, and in fact no other unit is given, whether it be the record of the building measurements, or those of the holy heave offering, so that we appear warranted in adopting the same basis throughout these visions of the Temple and the land. The unit he gives us is "a measuring reed of six cubits, of a cubit and a handbreadth each," and again he says, "the cubit is a cubit and a handbreadth" (40:5; 43:13). Taking the smallest cubit as the basic measure, we may conclude that Ezekiel's unit of a cubit and a handbreadth is equivalent to this smallest cubit of three palms or handbreadths plus one handbreadth, *or in other words that it is the same as the middle cubit of* 14.4 *inches.** Let us now apply this conclusion to the measurements of the holy heave offering, and see if it enables us to solve the difficulty referred to in a previous paragraph.

Upon this basis of measurement the holy heave offering with the city portion forms a great square of 34 miles, having an area of about 1160 square miles. Within its bounds centre all the interests of the Divine worship and government as established on the earth. There the Sanctuary, the holy of holies, and the city are situated with all the attendant ministers and servants of both. Here we have the mountain of Jehovah's House to which all nations shall come (Isa. 2; Micah 4). Now by reference to the map we see at once that on this basis of measure the holy heave offering is of such a size that it falls within the prescribed boundaries of the land, and allows a suitable portion on both the east and west side for the possession of the Prince. This result, as already stated, is impossible by the use of either the royal Egyptian cubit, or the smaller and common cubit of 18 inches, for in the former case the holy heave offering extends beyond the actual limits of the land, and in the latter, though it falls just within those limits, it leaves no portion for the Prince. To adopt the middle cubit solves this difficulty, and enables us to keep within the requirements of the text.†

* This cubit, Dr. Caldecott has determined, is the one used for building work, and so would seem the suitable unit for the prophet to mention, while since no other is given when land measures are recorded, it seems only reasonable to use the same unit throughout. This also appears justified by the results of its application, as I go on to show.

† Another argument in favor of the middle cubit, I find in calculating the height of the steps of the House. The elevation of the house above the altar court is specified as a full reed of six cubits, and the ascent is by 10 steps (41: 8 and 40: 49, according to the reading of the LXX). Thus the six cubits of height were divided into 10 steps, each being therefore six-tenths (.6) of a cubit. The middle cubit equals 14.4 inches, so that each step would be 8.64 inches high. This is a reasonable height for steps of such a structure. But to use a cubit of larger standard would make them objectionably high. Even the 18 inch cubit would make each step 10.8 inches, not to mention the still larger or royal Egyptian cubit of about 21 inches.

Here a word of explanation must be given for a departure from the location of the Offering as usually given by Commentators. It has been customary to place it just north of the Dead Sea, and (because of calculating it by larger cubits) permitting it to extend across the Jordan, so going beyond the east boundary. This doubtless seemed necessary to allow for the Prince's portion on the west, but of course this placed both part of the holy offering and the Prince's portion beyond the limits of the land on the east. As already explained these difficulties are overcome by using the smaller cubit. In addition to this change the present writer also thinks it is better to place the Offering between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, as shown on the map. His reason for this change from the usual location is found in the prophecy of Zechariah, which states that the land is to be a great plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem (14:10). He found that the Offering measured by the smaller cubit so closely fitted the territory between these points as almost to be exact. Geba is about six miles north of Jerusalem, and Rimmon is identified with *Umm er Ramamin*, about 30 miles south of Jerusalem. The map shows that the Offering as calculated on the basis of the smaller cubit may be so placed that its northern and southern boundaries touch Geba and Rimmon respectively. It may also be noted that to pass through these points the Offering must be placed at the angle shown on the map, making the northern and eastern lines of the great square run east with an inclination of 4° to the south.*

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* In this connection it has been a matter of interest to consider the identification of **Ramet-el-Khulil**, a spot close to Hebron (see map), with the Ramah of Samuel's altar where Saul feasted with the prophet and was informed of his selection to be king. It is a location of sacred memories, for within an hour's walk of this Ramah is the ancient city of Kirjath-Arba, afterwards called Hebron, where three of the Patriarchs are buried.

The interest in this identification of Ramah chiefly lies in the finding at this location a large walled enclosure which evidently served as a place of sacrifice and worship. It is taken to be the high place of 1 Sam. 9:11-13, etc. Here, that is to Ramah, Samuel returned after his yearly circuit, "for there was his house, and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar to Jehovah" (1 Sam. 7: 17).

The structure referred to has been carefully examined and measured, with the result that it is found to be an enclosed space of 100 x 145 cubits, consisting of a court 100 cubits square with the additional space of 100 x 45 cubits divided into three parts of different levels, and these give evidence of being used for the work of the sacrifices and the ablutions of the priests, a well being in one corner, while niches in the wall seem to indicate the location of stone tables for preparing the sacrifices, similar to those specified by Ezekiel in connection with the North Gate of the inner court. The entrance to this enclosure was by an eastern gateway.

Dr. Caldecott, to whom reference has been made, thoroughly investigated this site. He has presented convincing evidence for its identification with this notable centre of religion and government in Samuel's day.

I call particular attention to the fact that a survey of this walled enclosure shows that it was built with "the north and south walls running east with an inclination of 4 degrees to the south, as recorded in the third volume of the

A further indication that this is the location of the heave offering may be found in the direction of the stream which issues from the House (47:1, 2, 8). This goes out toward the east country, down into the plain or Arabah (the name of the depression of the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea, and southward to the Gulf of Akaba: see map), and into the sea, that is, the Dead Sea. In the location usually given to the Offering this stream, flowing east, would enter the River Jordan, *not the Sea;* but in the location here given the requirements are all met.

Another question remains. The holy heave offering is divided into three main parts, and we have before determined that the priests' portion is the central division; on which side then, are we to place the Levitical portion and that of the city? First, we may notice that in the location I have given to the Offering, the ancient city of Jerusalem lies in its northern part; then the distance between Geba and Jerusalem is about six miles, and the 5,000 reeds allotted for the city of Ezekel's vision is equal to 6.81 miles. This along with the fact that the prophecies do not intimate any change of site for the Millennial city, but rather maintain identity all through, seem to suggest that we are to place the city and its environs on the north side of the priests' portion. If we thus locate it on the north side of this great uplifted plain, the mountain of the Lord's house, may we not think of this answering to the Psalmist's description of the city of the future: "Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, His holy hill. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north,

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Survey of Western Palestine." This appears as the angle of inclination which fits the placement of the heave offering of Ezekiel between Geba and Rimmon (see map). Perhaps this has some significance, or is it mere coincidence?

It may not be amiss to quote briefly from Dr. Caldecott as to this very interesting site. He says:

"The special ruin to which I refer is a large rectangular ground-figure enclosed within monolithic stone walls, standing near to, though not visible from, the ancient highway leading from Jerusalem to Hebron. Countless travellers have looked on this mysterious handiwork of man with reverence and wonder. Each must have speculated as to who reared its massive masonry, and for what purpose. Archaeologists have agreed that we have not here the remains of a church. Nor could these low walls of solid stone have been those of any military fortification, as the work is of too refined and time-engrossing a character to have been done for purposes of war . . . the four walls which formed the enclosure [are not perfect]. That on the south side is in almost unbroken condition, many of its stones being 12 and 15 feet in length, laid without mortar, and truly squared. The west wall is in fair condition, as is a portion on the north side. The east wall has almost completely disappeared, though its line can still be traced. There is thus no difficulty in determining the size of the enclosure as originally constructed."

One surprising correspondence, I notice, between this structure and that of Ezekiel is found in the wall being 6 cubits high in both. Furthermore, Dr. Caldecott found that the cubit of 14.4 inches proved to be the common denominator of all the dimensions of original work still standing. (Quotations and references are from "The Tabernacle, its History and Structure," 2nd edition, by Dr. Caldecott.)

the city of the great King" (Ps. 48: 1, 2; *Num. Bible*). I have ventured to so show the city, placing the Levitical portion as the southern division of the Offering. In so placing the three parts of this Offering I am not forgetting that in the text where they are described the priests' portion is mentioned first, then the Levitical, and lastly the city, making it appear that such is the order from north to south. But as I have already pointed out, the Sanctuary is in the midst, and that being in the priests' part, necessitates making this the central division of the whole Offering. This seems to show that after specifying the whole Offering, the description follows along the line of the relative importance of the several parts, rather than giving their geographical order. From this point of view the order is quite natural, for certainly the priests' portion in which the Sanctuary is located is of first importance, while that of the Levites falls into the second place, both of these parts being considered distinctly holy; then lastly the part which is called "a common place for the city, for dwellings and for suburbs" (48:15). Thus the order of thought which governs throughout these visions governs in this also, namely, that what has to do with God, His holiness and glory, is always given first place. This is a lesson we may well take to heart, and consider our ways in its searching light, for who more than we should be ever careful to give Him His rightful place, caring for His honor, rendering happy obedience to His blessed will?

Without a doubt there are spiritual lessons to learn from the order and relation of the tribes, but these we will look at in their place.

As to the Sanctuary enclosure itself, this is shown by the outline plan. Full references to the text accompany this plan. The Gate buildings and the Temple itself are illustrated on separate plans drawn to a larger scale. Elevations of the buildings have not been attempted since measurements of height are not given. It is distinctly a plan which the prophet spreads out before us, for the only certain features of height are found in the number of steps specified for each court and the Temple square, except in the case of the altar.

SOME CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

As a help to understand the structure of the Gate-buildings, it may be useful to define some of the terms. First, the "threshold" is in Hebrew *saph*, a word suggesting the idea of a vestibule. "Lodge" is *tah;* it occurs only in Ezek. 40, 1 Kings 14: 28 and 2 Chron. 12:11, being rendered in the last two passages as "guard-chamber." The word therefore denotes a room of some kind. *Tah* is connected with a primitive root, meaning to mark off or out, used only in Num. 34:7, 8, for marking out the border of the land, and so we get the idea of a room that is marked out in some special way within a larger space. This suggests and appears to warrant arranging the lodges of the Gate-buildings as shown on the plan. This seems confirmed by the fact that the posts of these lodges are said to be "within the gate" (ver. 16). The word for posts is considered a little later.

A different word from *tah* is used for the chambers in the court, namely *lishkah*, which indicates a rather spacious room. Compare 1 Sam. 9:22. This word is from a root meaning to be joined, to adhere to, and so suitably describes the chambers around the court as being built in conjunction with its wall while also being connected or joined to each other in succession. The same word is used for the Chamber-buildings situated at the north and south sides of the separate place, doubtless because of similar construction and size.

Again a different word is used for the side-chambers of the House. It is *tsalah*, meaning a rib, literally of the body, or figuratively the sides or leaves of a double door; hence a side, and so architecturally, in the plural, *ribs* of a building, planks for wainscotting (1 Kings 6: 15; 7: 3): so this word fitly describes these side-chambers which like ribs or side planks go round the House.

"Porch" is *ulam*, from *alam*, which means "to tie fast," and so applies to a vestibule or porch as *bound* to the building.

"Post," or posts, is *ayil*, anything strong, and used for an oak or other strong tree, also for a ram, and architecturally a lintel as well as a post, or pilaster, as being a strong support. Thus it applies to a wall that projects forward, forming what serves as a partition or division, and also the jamb of an entry or doorway. This suggests that what is called the posts of the lodges "within the gate" are sections of wall projecting from the outer walls into the gate-building,

so marking off these lodges from the surrounding space, an idea applicable to these lodges from the Hebrew word used for them, as we have seen. It is specified that these lodges and their posts had windows, and this would indicate that we are not to think of the posts as pillars or columns but sections of wall. (See plan in the following pages.)

"Border" is *gebul.* It is the usual word for border, that is, the boundary of any given territory. It is so used repeatedly in Ezek. 48, and elsewhere. That which is so called in the Gate-buildings is before the lodges and measured one cubit. This indicates something in the nature of a barrier, or fence, which marks off the lodges from the central corridor, so protecting them from encroachment on the part of the passing crowd. This would be necessary if, as supposed, these lodges were used by the guards or keepers of the gate. The entrances to them would seem to be in the outer walls, and so lead into the outer court. This conclusion is drawn from ver. 13 in which the total measurement across the gate is given, and the fact noted that entry is opposite entry.

Finally, we have the word rendered "projections." This is *elam,* and is probably from *ayil* for posts, a word we have already considered. In the text it occurs in the plural only, and is variously taken to mean a colonnade, or vestibules, porches, recesses. It is conceded to be a word difficult to understand and apply. From its use in this chapter (vers. 16, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, uniformly rendered "projections" in the accompanying text) it is clearly distinguished from "posts." Whatever the word signifies has *windows* as mentioned in vers. 16, 25, 29, 33; an exception is the North inner gate, in connection with which they are not specified (ver. 36). Again, what this word signifies is said to be *before the steps* in the North and South gates of the outer court, but this is not said in connection with the East gate. As to the South and East gates of the inner court, what this word signifies is said to be *toward the outer court;* but as to the North gate no mention is made, and the text reads, "its *posts* toward the outer court"—the word for posts appearing instead of that rendered "projections" as in the other cases, although this word occurs in its usual connection in ver. 34 as compared with the description of the other gates. It may be further noted that in each instance there follows the mention of the steps, and this seems to bring them and whatever this word signifies into close relation. Ver. 30 gives the only dimensions of these so-called "projections." But another difficulty confronts us here. Of this verse, Davidson says, it "is wanting in the LXX and some MSS., and in others deleted. No object belonging to the gateways has

hitherto been mentioned to which the measurements can apply. The verse may have arisen from an inaccurate repetition of the measurements given in the previous verse." In the text the word appears as plural, but he considers this form of doubtful authenticity, and says that there is no evidence that the word has any other sense than "porch." While to adopt this meets some of the difficulties, it does not solve all. If we take it to be singular, and to mean porch, then this determines that the porch of the inner gates is at the end toward the outer court; this apparently agrees with what is said of the porch of the North inner gate, for in vers. 38-42 the porch appears to be in close relation to the ascent or the steps of this gate; but when we come to the outer gates we find that what this word speaks of, and which Davidson considers should mean "porch," is also stated to be "before the steps," whereas the porch of these gates is specifically stated to be "toward the House" (ver. 9), which means at the inner end of the gate and not the front end where the steps are located; and further this inner location of the porch of these gates seems confirmed by what is said of the Prince who eats in it before the Lord (ch. 44: 3)—this would not be possible in the *shut* East gate if the porch was at the end where the steps ascend to it. In view of this, if we accept the suggestion and read "porch" for "projections," we must conclude that the outer gates had two porches, one at each end, while the inner gates had only one at the end toward the outer court. There seems nothing to warrant the former conclusion.

After all there seems no better solution than to consider the term to refer to the sections of wall which project from the posts within the gate which are between the lodges, and which therefore form the lodges and are joined by the posts (wall) which close these lodges toward the outer court, as indicated on the plan. This arrangement meets the several features already mentioned in regard to these parts, or, as we shall call them, "wall-projections." They are thus distinguished from the posts, and all have windows. They appear before the steps in the sense of facing one as the ascent is made, the steps being the full width of the gate-building. Then these wall-projections of the inner gates could be rightly specified as toward the outer court since these gates are situated wholly in that court (see outline plan). This item of information has its importance, for it establishes the location of these inner gates in reference to the courts. Apparently the one point of difference between the outer and inner gates is that in the latter the porch is situated at the outer end toward the outer court, and in the former at the inner end toward the House.

Two or three other points remain. Ver. 11 presents a difficulty. The statement, "the length of the gate 13 cubits," seems impossible to reconcile with the other measurements and preserve the 50 cubits given in ver. 15, for as a measurement of length it would naturally run from east to west. The LXX has "breadth" in place of length. A possible solution is that this dimension refers to what is primarily considered the gate, namely the gate-*entry* already specified as 10 cubits in breadth, plus the walls of 1½ cubits on each side, making up the 13 cubits of this verse. Thus it would be proper to speak of the breadth of the gate as being this size, and all the other parts as "wall-projections" which, as may be seen by the plan, make up the 25 cubits of breadth given in ver. 13.

Ver. 14 is obscure. "He made posts of 60 cubits, and up to the posts was the court of the gate round about." The reading of the LXX affords no real help. . Some take this as applying to the posts of the porch in ver. 9, making it mean their height, comparing them to the pylons of Egyptian structures or the obelisks set up before the doors of their temples. But the posts in ver. 9 are only 2 cubits (2.88 feet), and a height of 60 cubits (72 feet) is out of all proportion and an improbable construction. An added difficulty is the word *made* when elsewhere in this part it is a matter of measurement. The latter part of the verse, though not easy to understand, may mean that the court surrounded the gate on all three sides, but as to the former statement a really satisfactory solution does not seem possible at present.

Considering these textual difficulties, the plan here proposed seems to give, as near as now attainable, an intelligible lay-out of these gate-buildings.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE DEAD SEA

"The Dead Sea receives, beside the Jordan, four or five smaller streams, but has no relief for its waters, except through evaporation. This is raised to enormous proportions by the fervent heat which prevails in the sunken valley during the greater part of the year. The extracted moisture usually forms a haze impenetrable to the eye for more than a few miles, but sometimes vast columns of mist rear themselves from the sea, heavy clouds are formed above, and thunderstorms, the more violent for their narrow confines, rage, as the torn coasts testify, with lightning and floods of rain... While the water of the ocean contains 4 to 6 per cent of solids in solution, the Dead Sea holds from 24 to 26 per cent, or five times as much. The water is very nauseous to the taste and oily to the touch, leaving on the skin, when it dries, a thick crust of salt. But it is very brilliant, seen from far away no lake on earth looks more blue and beautiful. Swim out upon it, and at the depth of twenty feet you can count the pebbles through the transparent waters....The surface is generally smooth, the heavy water rises not easily; but when in storm it does rise, the waves are immensely powerful...like the blows of a sledge hammer. No fish can exist in the waters, nor is it proved that any low forms of life have been discovered.

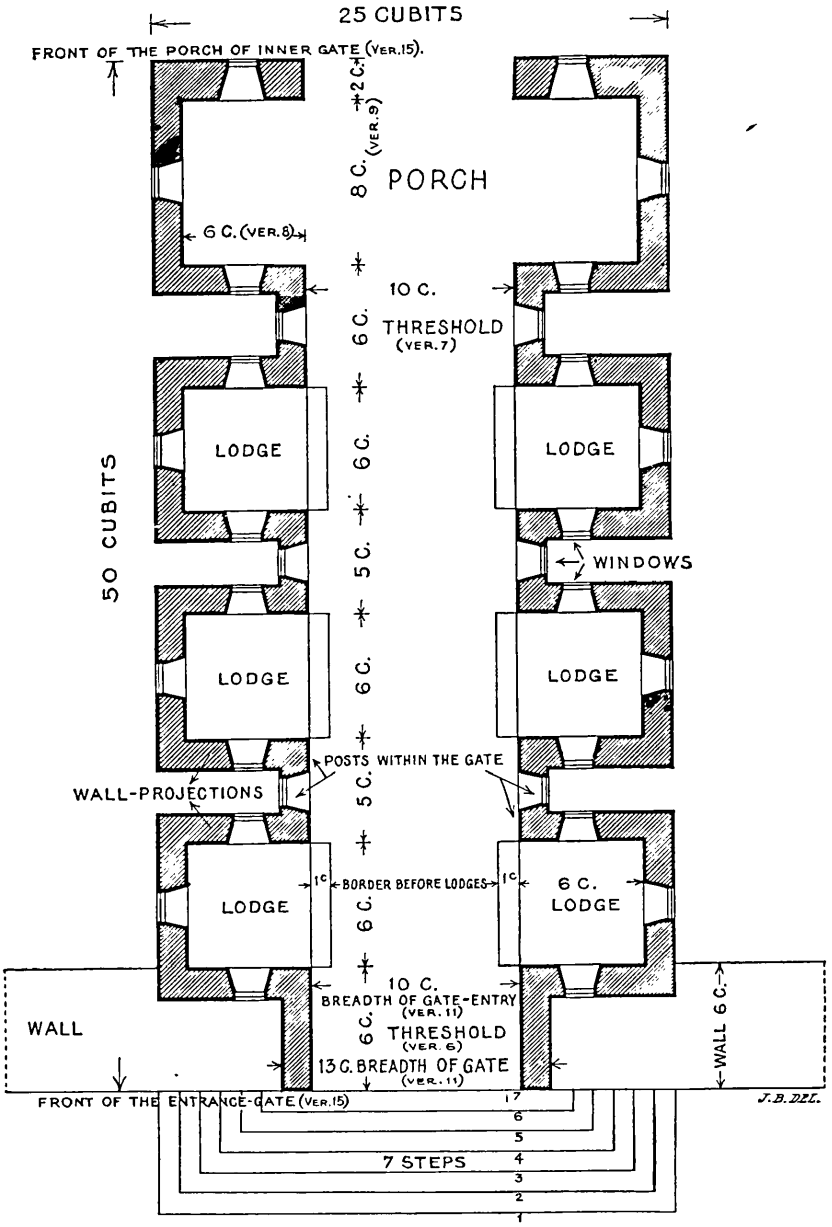
"These bitter and imprisoned waters, that are yet so blue and brilliant, chafe a low beach of gravel, varied by marl or salted marsh ...but the gravel is crowned with an almost constant hedge of driftwood, every particle of which is stripped of bark and bleached, while much of it glitters with salt. You could not imagine a more proper crown for Death. With this the brilliant illusion of the Dead Sea fades, and everywhere beyond, violence and desolation reign supreme. If the coast is flat you have salt-pans or a briny swamp; if terraced there is a yellow, scurfy stretch of soil, with a few thorn bushes and succulent weeds. Ancient beaches of the sea are visible all around it, steep banks from five to fifty feet of stained and greasy marl, very friable, with heaps of rubbish at their feet, and crowned by nothing but their own bare, crumbling brows. Some hold that these gave the region its ancient name, the Vale of Siddim; and in truth it is they which chiefly haunt one's memory of the Dead Sea. Last

crumbling shelves of the upper world, there are not in nature more weird symbols of forsakenness and desolation...

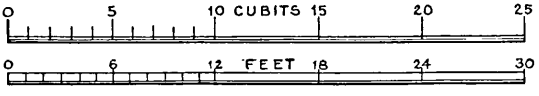
"In this awful hollow [which seems like a] bit of the infernal regions come up to the surface, this hell [as the inhabitants sometimes call it] with the sun shining into it," was the scene of one of God's most awful judgments on human sin. "The glare of Sodom and Gomorrah is flung down the whole length of Scripture history. It is the popular and standard judgment on human sin. The story is told in Genesis; it is applied in Deuteronomy, by Amos, by Isaiah, by Jeremiah, by Zephaniah, in Lamentations, and by Ezekiel. Our Lord Himself employs it more than once as the figure of the judgment. He threatens it upon cities where the Word is preached in vain, and there we feel the flame scorch our own cheeks. Paul, Peter, Jude, all make mention of it. In the Apocalypse the great city of sin is spiritually called Sodom.....

"It is in accordance with the grace of God, making that first which was last and that last which was first, that this awful vale of judgment should be the scene of one of the most lively and stupendous hopes of prophecy."

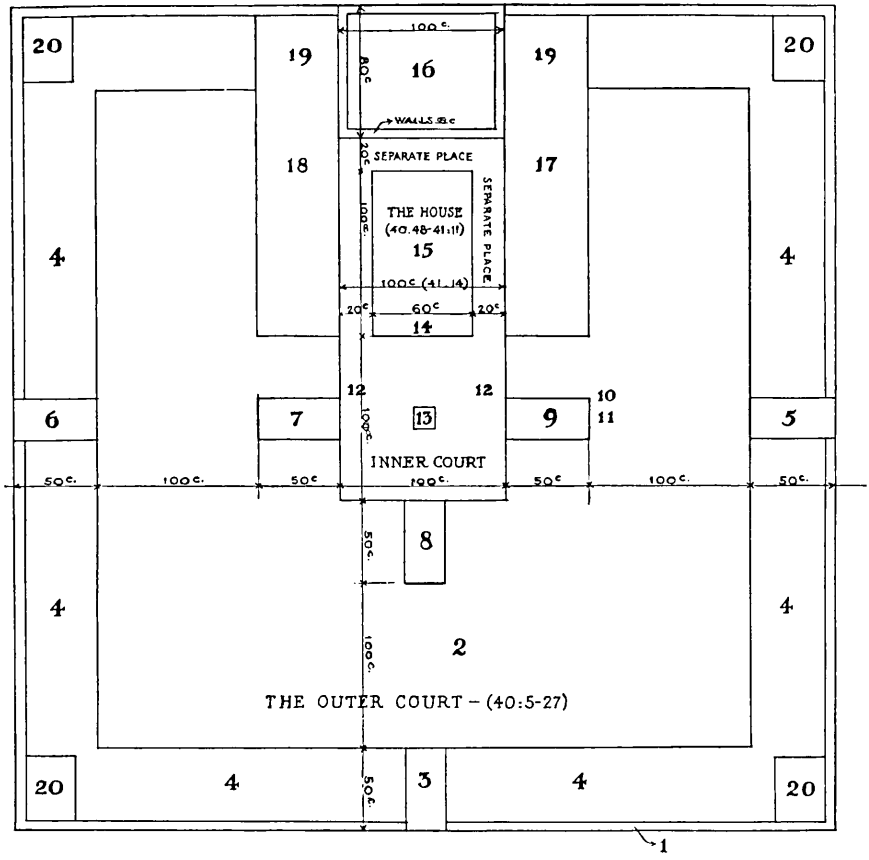
("Historical Geography of the Holy Land," Geo. Adam Smith.)



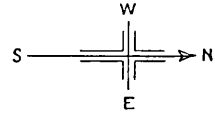
PLAN OF THE GATE BUILDINGS

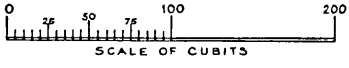


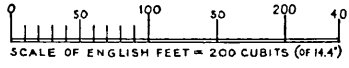
OUTLINE PLAN OF THE COURTS AND TEMPLE

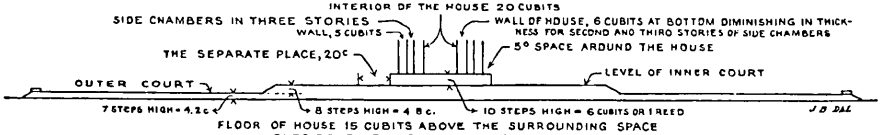


EACH SIDE OF SQUARE 500 CUBITS








INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE 20 CUBITS
SIDE CHAMBERS IN THREE STORIES
WALL, 5 CUBITS
WALL OF HOUSE, 6 CUBITS AT BOTTOM DIMINISHING IN THICKNESS FOR SECOND AND THIRD STORIES OF SIDE CHAMBERS
5 SPACE ARDUND THE HOUSE
THE SEPARATE PLACE, 20
LEVEL OF INNER COURT
OUTER COURT
7 STEPS HIGH = 4.2 c
8 STEPS HIGH = 4.8 c.
10 STEPS HIGH = 6 CUBITS OR 1 REED
J. D. DAL

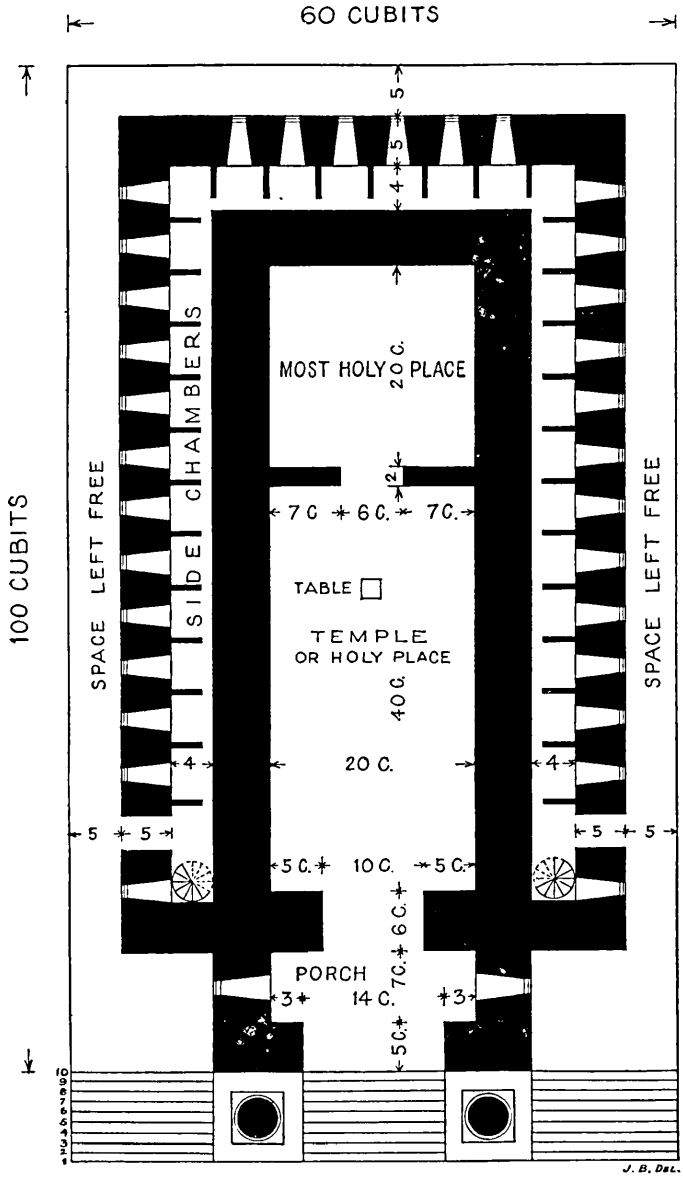
FLOOR OF HOUSE 15 CUBITS ABOVE THE SURROUNDING SPACE OUTSIDE OF THE OUTER WALL OF OUTER COURT.

CROSS SECTION SHOWING THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE COURTS AND THE HOUSE

REFERENCES TO OUTLINE PLAN

1.—Outer wall around court (ch. 40: 5).
2.—Outer court, its details (ch. 40: 6-27).
3.—East Gate of outer court (ch. 40: 6-16).
4.—Cells and pavement around the outer court, arranged on three sides in groups of five on each side of the Gate buildings (ch. 40: 17-19).
5.—North Gate of Outer court (ch. 40: 20-23).
6.—South Gate of Outer court (ch. 40: 24-27).
7.—South Gate of Inner court (ch. 40: 28-31).
8.—East Gate of Inner court (ch. 40: 32-34).
9.—North Gate of Inner court (ch. 40: 35-37).
10.—Cell for washing the Burnt offering near North Gate—text does not definitely fix the location (ch. 40: 38).
11.—Sacrificial tables connected with the North Gate. These are placed in the porch of the Gate and adjacent to its ascent (ch. 40: 39-43).
12.—Cells for the priests who are keepers of the charge of the House and the Altar—text does not definitely fix the location except that they are said to be outside the inner gate, in the inner court (ch. 40: 44-46).
13.—The Altar (ch. 40: 47). For its dimensions see ch. 43:13-17.
14.—Porch of the House (ch. 40: 48, 49).
15.—The Temple itself, holy and most holy places, the side chambers and the separate place (ch. 41: 1-11).
16.—The building to the west of the House, and a summary of the principal measurements (ch. 41: 12-15).
17.—The cell building on the north side of the separate place (ch. 42: 1-9).
18.—The cell building on the south side of the separate place* (ch. 42: 10-14).
19.—Cooking places for the priests located at the west of the cell buildings devoted to their use—see 17 and 18 (ch. 46: 19, 20).
20.—Cooking places for the sacrifices of the people (ch. 46: 21-24).

* Note. The text describing these two buildings is difficult to interpret, and in certain features obscure. The general location is clear, and this is indicated on the plan; but the actual arrangement of the several parts presents a problem to which a really satisfactory solution is hard to find.



PLAN OF THE HOUSE

DIAGRAM OF THE CITY-GATES

CHAP. 48:30-35

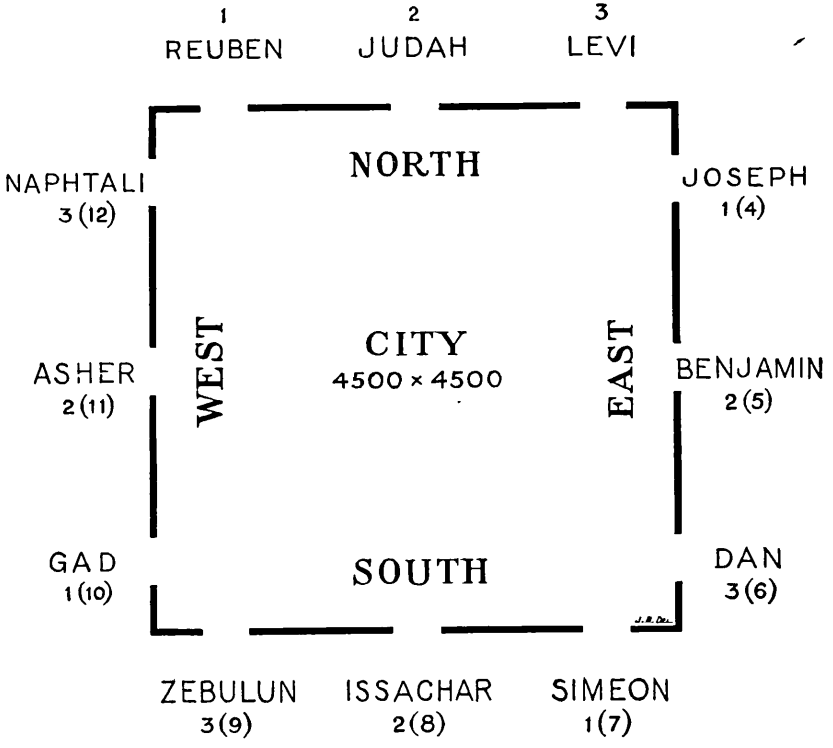
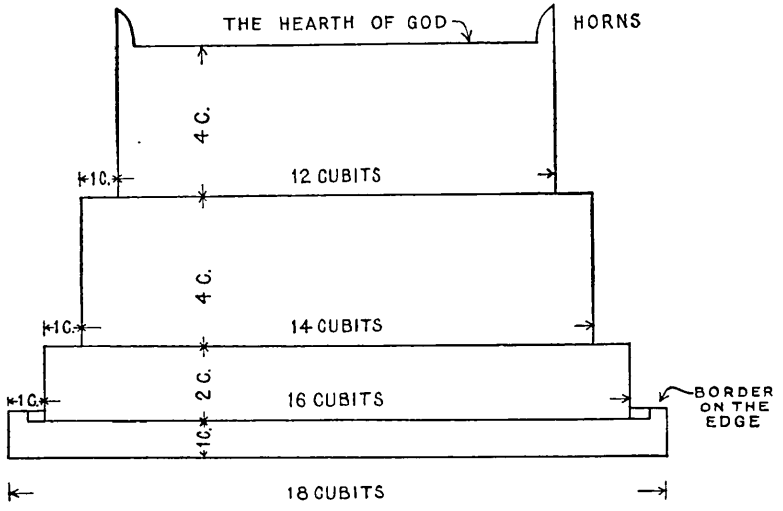
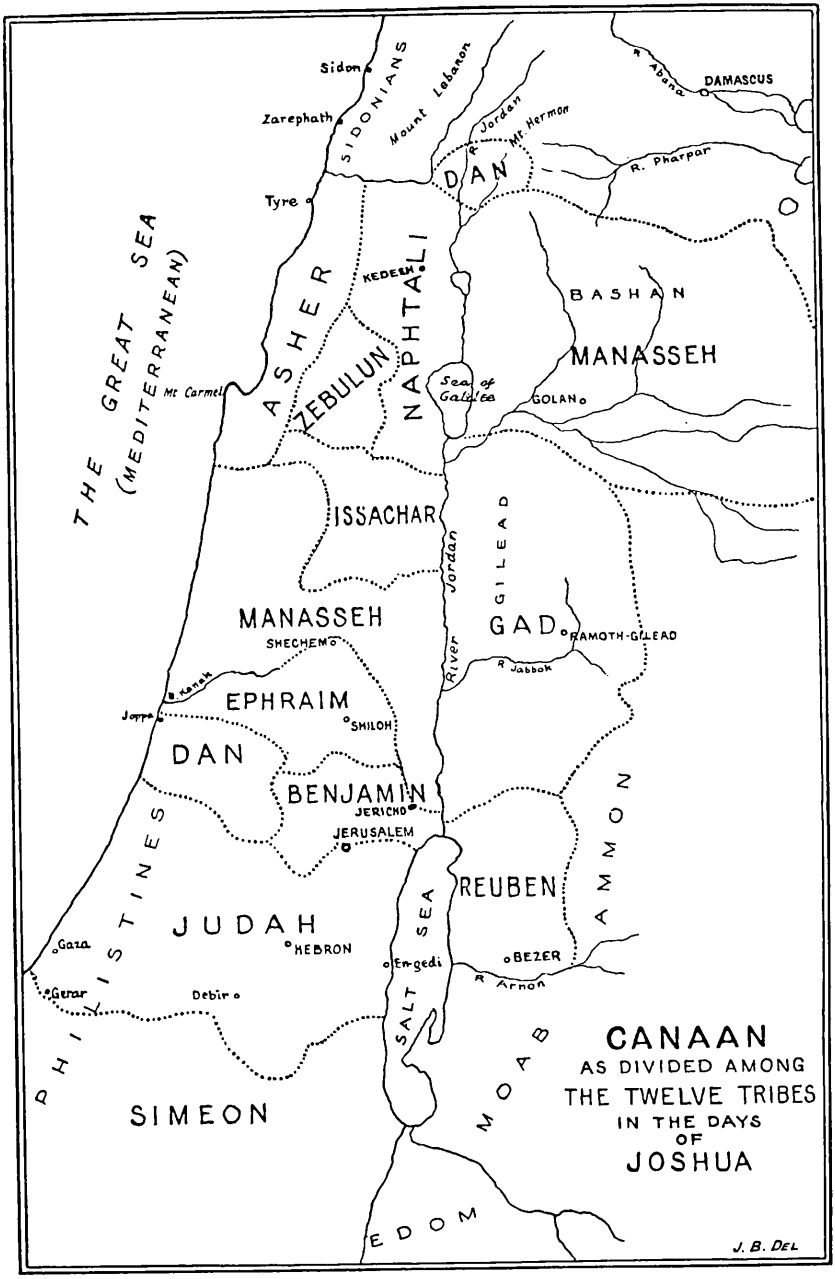
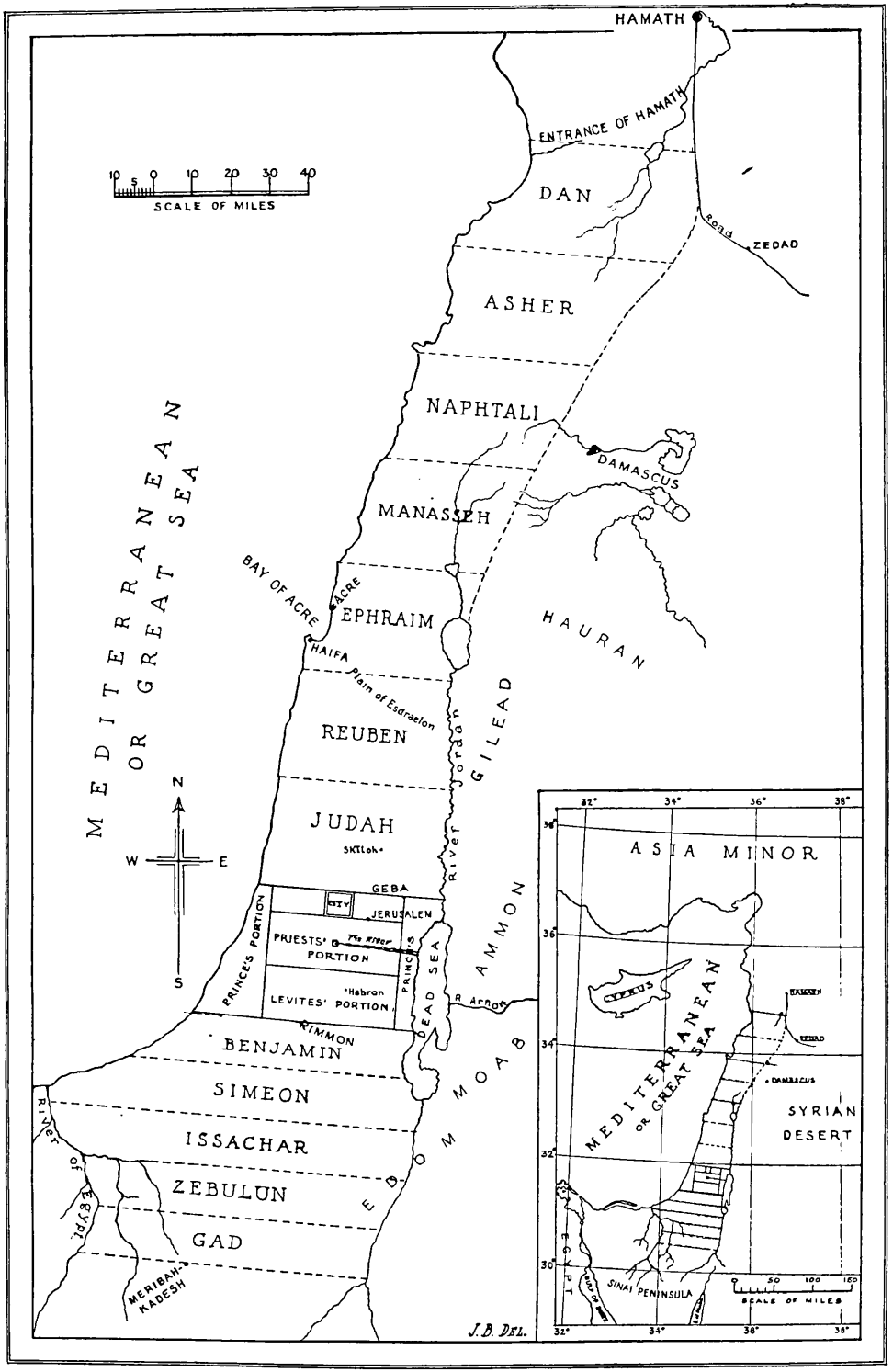


DIAGRAM OF THE ALTAR




Sidon
Zarephath
SIDONIANS
Mount Lebanon
R. Jordan
Mt. Hermon
R. Abana
DAMASCUS
R. Pharpar
Tyre
DAN
THE GREAT SEA (MEDITERRANEAN)
KEDESH
ASHER
NAPHTALI
BASHAN
MANASSEH
Mt Carmel
ZEBULUN
Sea of Galilee
GOLAN
ISSACHAR
Jordan River
GILEAD
MANASSEH
SHECHEM
GAD
RAMOTH-GILEAD
R Jabbok
R Kanah
EPHRAIM
Joppa
SHILOH
DAN
BENJAMIN
JERICHO
JERUSALEM
PHILISTINES
REUBEN
AMMON
JUDAH
Gaza
HEBRON
SALT SEA
En-gedi
BEZER
R Arnon
Gerar
Debir
MOAB
CANAAN
AS DIVIDED AMONG
THE TWELVE TRIBES
IN THE DAYS
OF
JOSHUA
SIMEON
EDOM
J. B. DEL



Future Division of the Land